



**FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
DIVISION OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES  
5370 Public Safety Place  
Frederick, MD 21704**

## **Pre-CPAT Nutrition Guidelines**

Here are some recommendations for eating before the CPAT; however, remember that everyone is different in his or her tolerance to foods – some people can eat almost anything just before they participate, while others have a more sensitive stomach. It is best to experiment with different foods and meal timing before mentoring sessions, so you'll know what foods to eat and when to eat them before the test. Don't experiment with something new the day of a big event!

- **Purpose of the Pre-CPAT Meal**

1. To prevent low blood sugar and its symptoms of fatigue, indecisiveness, blurred vision and light-headedness.
2. To prevent hunger feelings and to settle the stomach by absorbing gastric juices.
3. If eaten far enough in advance for digestion to occur (i.e. 2-4 hours), to replenish fuel (glycogen) stores in the muscles.
4. To allow optimal exertion and performance without abdominal discomfort.

- **Principles**

1. Carbohydrates make the best pre-CPAT foods. They digest quickly and are easily taken into the muscles. High protein foods (i.e., meat, eggs) take longer to digest, while fatty foods (i.e., fried foods, hamburgers) sit in the stomach the longest and may produce a feeling of heaviness.
2. Be sure to drink plenty of water before your event to prevent dehydration: 2-3 glasses of water up to 2 hours before the event, and more just before the event if you can tolerate it.
3. If you absolutely can't eat before a physical event like CPAT, eat an additional high-carbohydrate food the day before.
4. You can't cram good nutrition into one day – you should eat a high carbohydrate diet every day to ensure optimal replacement of muscle glycogen.

- **Average Digestion Times**

Large Meal: 3-4 hours

Smaller Meal: 2-3 hours

Liquid Meal: 1-2 hours

- **Recommendations For Meals Depending on Event Time**

1. Morning Events

- Eat a large high-carbohydrate supper and bedtime snack the night before. If you can tolerate it, eat a light snack in the morning to prevent hunger, settle your stomach and prevent low blood sugar levels. One or two slices of toast can be effective.

2. Afternoon Events

- Eat a large high-carbohydrate breakfast and a light lunch

3. Evening Events

- Eat a large high-carbohydrate breakfast and lunch, then an optional light snack 1-2 hours before the event.

- **Meal Suggestions**

Here are some high-carbohydrate/low fat pre-competition meal suggestions:

1. Breakfast: Cereals, low fat milk, instant breakfast drinks, bananas, toast (especially whole wheat), muffins, bagels, French toast, pancakes, waffles, applesauce, yogurt.
2. Lunch: Soup and crackers, sandwich (no mayonnaise), low fat milk, pizza (especially thick crust, single cheese, no meat).
3. Dinner: Pasta with tomato sauce, rice, potatoes, vegetables, small serving of chicken or fish.
4. Snack: For morning, between events or before bed: crackers, bagels, canned instant sports drinks, muffins, breadsticks, pretzels, granola, oatmeal raisin cookies, un buttered popcorn, toast, canned or fresh fruit, yogurt, frozen yogurt, biscuits, rice cakes, banana bread, chicken or turkey sandwiches.