

What to Eat Between a Doubleheader

Doubleheaders are becoming more and more common in Youth and Babe Ruth baseball with the increase in AAU/Travel teams and tournaments. One major concept is how differently teams play from Game 1 to Game 2, both good and bad. Sometimes a team comes out in Game 1 with all sorts of energy and enthusiasm and then by the time Game 2 starts they come out with heads down and lack of alertness. One of the keys to both an individual and team's success to play with energy and alertness over what could potentially be 6 hours of baseball (usually 20-40 mins between games) is nutrition.

All too often there is a very familiar smell in the air...burgers and hot dogs!!! In some communities, it's a tradition at for parents to organize a cookout between games. As soon as that first game ends the players head out to the cookout and fill their bellies with burgers, hot dogs, meatball sandwiches, cookies, brownies, Gatorades (that's a whole other topic), granola bars, and so much more. By the time Game 2 starts all the players want to do is lay down in the dugout and soak in their own gluttony.

For proper nutrition prior to a doubleheader, it is crucial to have a 24-hour plan in place to maximize the effects of your between game snack. With that said, here is a sample of what to eat and when to eat it on a day that you have a doubleheader. Let's just say you have games on Saturday at 11am and 2pm.

Friday night: Be sure to have a well-balanced dinner including roughly 40% slow-digesting carbohydrates, 40% protein, and 20% fat plus drink plenty of water (no mention of Gatorade). Athletes should be drinking 48+oz of water each

day and most players over the age of 13 should be taking in 60-120oz.

Saturday:

8am Breakfast (Options: Egg whites w/ vegetables, whole wheat toast, yogurt, fruit, cottage cheese, protein shakes, all-natural peanut butter). Be sure to get your carbohydrates from whole wheat/grain sources. Avoid: white bread, heavy amounts of cheese (like in an omelet or breakfast sandwich), fatty meats such as sausage/ham. Be sure to have water with breakfast NOT FRUIT JUICE which is overloaded with sugar.

9:30am-10:45am Pre-Game (Warm-up, stretch, throw, infield/outfield, batting practice). Keep hydrating with plenty of water. Only if it's really hot and the athlete is losing a lot of sweat should he use Gatorade. Even at that point, a 50-50 mix of Gatorade and water provides the optimum carbohydrate – electrolyte – hydration mixture.

10:45am Snack: This is a MUST as you will not have much of an opportunity to eat until between games and you want to make sure your blood-sugar levels don't get too low which is when you start to lose energy, alertness, and overall enthusiasm. I would suggest either a low-sugar protein bar or a hand-full of mixed nuts, something that you can eat on the bench without causing a distraction. Be sure to get water as well.

1:00-2:00pm Between Games: Depending on when Game 1 ends and Game 2 starts you want to make sure you don't waste time especially if you are starting Game 2. This is not time to lay down and socialize, IT'S TIME TO PREPARE! As soon as your coach dismisses you for the time allotted before next game begins, you need to accomplish 3 things:

#1: Eat/Hydrate – My suggested between game snacks are a light sandwich (on whole wheat bread) (need at least 45

minutes once sandwich is gone), piece of fruit, protein/granola bar, mixed nuts. My personal favorite choices are:

Sandwich: 1/2 Grilled Chicken Sandwich on Whole Wheat bread with avocado, lettuce & tomato

Fruit: Banana w/ All-Natural Peanut Butter

Protein/Granola Bar: Low-Sugar Detour Bar (30g Protein!)

2: Warm-up...Again! – You need to prepare your body after some down-time. Just some light jogging, high knees, butt kicks, carioca, and arm circles should do the trick.

#3: Skills – Depending on what position you are playing in Game 2, you should either take some soft toss, take some groundballs/fly balls or if you are in relief, do some light throwing.

In closing, please remember two simple concepts – hydrate with water unless extreme sweating occurs and limit the snacks in between games to simple carbohydrates and protein unless you're provided more than an hour.