

Power-Fuel Nutrition for Hockey Players

Hockey season is back on track, but before you go out to play – have you done your homework to make sure that your body is power-fueled? Skating and playing hard require lots of energy and enough fluids to keep you in the game. Carbohydrate-rich foods are your best bet to fueling your body. To get the most out of your performance, here are some sport nutrition tips to ensure that you are power-fueled and well hydrated before and after hockey practices and games.

1) Choose carbohydrate-rich foods as your best energy fuel. The following foods are chock full of carbohydrates:

- Breads & Cereals (toast, crackers, granola bars, cereal)
- Vegetables & Fruit (dried fruit, fruit salad, vegetable soup and salads)
- Legumes (chick peas, lentils, kidney beans, hummus dip)
- Milk and Yogurt (plain/chocolate milk, fruit yogurt, kefir)

2) Be sure to include foods that add protein. The following foods pack a protein punch when they accompany your carbohydrate-rich foods:

- Nut butters (Peanut, almond, cashew, sesame)
- Eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese
- Hummus dip, more bean than meat chili
- Lean cuts of meat, poultry or fish

How much you will need to eat and drink before and after hockey practice and games will depend upon your age, weight, height, gender, the intensity of your practice session or game and the time you spend exercising.

Typical guidelines to power-fuel your body BEFORE hockey practices or games:

Larger meals should be consumed 3-4 hours before hockey practices or games to ensure that the food that you eat is digested and you are ready to perform. Sometimes you may not have a lot of time to eat a meal so eat a large snack 1-2 hours before your workout to get the energy that you need. For practices lasting more than 60 minutes, a small snack 15-30 minutes beforehand is a good idea to ensure that you are topped up and ready to go! Use the examples below to help you plan your own pre-workout nutrition program.

Meal Examples – Pre Workout	Large Snack – Pre Workout	Small Snack – Pre-Workout
<i>With milk, vegetable and/or fruit juice</i>	<i>With milk, vegetable and/or fruit juice</i>	
Omelet or potato frittata	Hard cooked egg or cheese with crackers	A few crackers with fruit/vegetable juices, water
French toast with fruit and yogurt	Fresh fruit with cottage cheese	Piece of fresh or dried fruit with water

Low fibre cereal with fresh fruit and milk, toast with peanut butter and banana	Whole wheat bread or bagels with a slice of cheese or nut butter	Small granola bar with water or fruit juice
Sandwiches with low fat cheese, sliced roast beef/pork, turkey or chicken and veggies	Date squares, sesame snacks or oatmeal cookies	½ small sandwich with fruit or vegetable juices, water
Grilled chicken and veggie kabobs on rice	Low fat yogurt with granola	Chocolate milk or fruit smoothies

Hockey players (like all other athletes) need to ensure they are drinking enough fluids during their exercise. Water is the number one choice but if you are looking for some extra energy have some sliced oranges with water. Sport drinks have just enough energy to keep you going on the ice and they also have added electrolytes (e.g. sodium and potassium). Adding sport drink crystals to your water bottle helps promote drinking and adds flavor.

Typical guidelines to power-fuel your body AFTER activity:

It is important to remember that your body needs to be refueled after activity to help your muscles recover and repair. Eat a snack or small meal rich in carbohydrates within an hour or two of finishing your practice or game. Here are some ideas to get you refueled.

Large Snack Ideas - Post Workout <i>with Juice or Milk</i>	Small Meal Ideas - Post Workout <i>with Juice or Milk</i>
French toast fingers with maple syrup	French toast with fruit and maple syrup
Poached egg on an English muffin with a slice of cheese and tomato	½ grilled cheese sandwich with tomato slices
Medium muffin with piece of cheese	Fruity Cottage cheese omelette
½ Sandwich <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanut butter/banana • Hard cooked egg salad • Meat or cheese 	Whole Sandwich <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanut butter/banana • Hard cooked egg salad • Meat or cheese
Smoothies or yogurt	Pasta and Meat Sauce
Hard boiled egg with vegetable crackers	Chili with more beans than meat
Hummus dip with cut-up vegetables	Lentil soup with salad

To ensure you are practicing Power-Fuel nutrition, keep some of these (non-perishable) food and fluid items in your sport bag, gym locker, school back pack, in the car or make your own survival nutrition kit to carry with you.

- Individual sized cereal (or pre-bagged cereal from home)
- Cereal bars/granola bars
- Canned fruit (snack packs)
- Dried and fresh fruit
- Applesauce (individual containers)
- Concentrated fruit juice (individual boxes)
- Veggie sticks (mixed vegetables)
- Trail mix (nuts/seeds/dried fruits)
- Bagels, melba toast or bread sticks
- Stoned wheat thins
- Low fat oatmeal raisin cookies
- Fig Newton bars
- Popcorn (pre-made at home and bagged)
- Jam, honey, peanut butter
- Puddings

Every athlete is different, so experiment to find what foods and fluids work best for you. Remember that you need to practice sport nutrition to be successful, just like practicing for your next game.

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