

Nutrition Requirements in Youth Hockey Players

With games occurring at various times throughout the day it can be difficult to know when and what to feed the kids (both before and after games).

Pre-game nutrition

1-2 hours before the game-car ride snacks (low protein, low fat, high carbohydrate) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hydration is more important than food in the hour before the game (Juice/ sport drinks/ water)• Fresh fruit (low fiber)
2-3 hours before the game <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Juice/ sport drinks/ water• Fresh fruit (low fiber)• Breads, bagels, crackers, English muffins
3 or more hours before the game <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Juice/ sport drinks/ water• Fresh fruit (low fiber)• Breads, bagels, crackers, English muffins• Peanut butter, lean meat, low-fat cheese• Yogurt (regular or frozen)• Pasta with tomato sauce• Cereal with milk

When?

- Eat one to four hours before a game to leave enough time for the stomach to empty
- For dinner time games, a medium sized meal should be eaten as soon as your child arrives home from school (e.g. a sandwich with a modest amount of protein and fat, some fruit and fluids)

How Much?

- The **closer** to the game the meal is eaten, the **smaller** the meal

What to Eat?

- Carbohydrate-dense foods
- The pre-game meal should consist **mostly** of whole grains (cereal, rice, pasta and/or breads) along with a fruit or vegetable and a small protein source
- If your child becomes hungry in the 1-2 hours prior to the game, offer a small amount of fresh or dried fruit, crackers, toast, bagels and cheerios (encourage hydration with juice, sports drinks or water)
- **Hydration in the hour prior to the game is more important to your child's performance than any food**
- Avoid high-fat foods and high-fiber foods (high-fiber diet is good for overall health but not right before games as you don't want you son's system to be full of food while playing)

Postgame Nutrition--what to eat after the game?

- Ensure your child is rehydrating in this post-game period—see hydration information—in short this is about 4ml/kg weight of your child or ½ liter for every 0.5kg of weight loss during the game
- Eat some carbohydrates within 30 minutes of the game followed by more carbohydrates during the 2 hours after the game to replace energy stores in the muscles
- Small amounts of protein facilitates muscle repair
- Encourage your child to eat postgame snacks that are nutrient dense (banana, yogurt, orange juice, etc.) and not eat foods and fluids that are high in fat and sugar (candy, chips etc.)
- When there is a tight time turnaround between two games (less than 2 hours) fluids are critical
- With a tight turnaround, fluids should be accompanied by primarily carbohydrates and a small amount of fat and protein—low fat chocolate milk fits this bill for many kids

General Dietary Advice—day in and day out

- Encourage a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods
- The training diet should include a daily mix of:
 - Carbohydrates: 55% to 75% of total energy/calories (breads, cereals, grains, pastas, vegetables, and fruits)—this percentage is for athletes in training and not necessarily for others
 - Proteins: 15% to 20% of total energy/calories (meats, fish, poultry, tofu, dairy, beans, eggs, and nuts)
 - Fats: 25% to 30% of total energy/ calories (oils, butter, and margarine—fat is also found in many protein rich foods)