

# SPORT NUTRITION AND HYDRATION IN MINOR HOCKEY

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When considering the consumption of products geared for optimizing or enhancing player performance, parents and team officials need to remember the following:

1. Most nutritional products and sport drinks are designed for the adult athlete, and more specifically, geared toward the endurance athlete. These athletes train continuously for 90+ minutes. Minor hockey players are never on the ice for more than 90 minutes, and do not train or play hockey without frequent breaks. While endurance athletes need to replace electrolytes after several hours of intensive training, young hockey players need to replace water and the calories burned, in the form of carbohydrate and glycogen. They require a product with approximately 100 calories, or less, to replenish their energy requirements.
2. Sport drinks such as Gatorade and PowerAde offer minimal calories and are high in sodium. There should be sufficient sodium in the average diet that eliminates the need for additional salt unless the athlete exercises for more than four hours.
3. Natural fruit juices, with readily useable carbohydrates, provide the best source of fluid for an immediate boost following the game.
4. Water, plain and simple, is the best product to hydrate a tired, sweaty minor hockey player.

## Hydrating Minor Hockey Players

Pre-game hydration should start hours before the event. Players should be encouraged to drink enough fluids to keep their urine clear and pale. Players should have to urinate frequently throughout the day. Two hours before a game or practice, they should drink one to two, 8-ounce glasses of water. This gives the kidneys time to eliminate any excess before the game. The actual amount of fluids or water is dependent on the size of the player.

## Pre-game Nutrition

Pre-game nutrition should be high in simple carbohydrates and low in fat and protein. Fibre-rich carbohydrates include homemade muffins, whole wheat bread, bagels, pita bread, dry cereal, fruit and vegetables. Low fat protein choices include roasted chicken, turkey and canned tuna. Low fat yogurt, especially in tubes, is a great pre- and post-game energy booster.

## Tournament Nutrition

Tournament nutrition can be made easy if snacks are packed at home, and high sugar, fat and salt loading is avoided. The following are recommended snacks:

- Fresh fruit – apples, bananas, oranges, etc.
- Fresh vegetables – carrots, celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, etc.
- Crackers – melba toast, rice crackers – low salt, etc.
- Sandwiches – tuna, turkey breast, roast beef, etc.
- Cookies – fig newtons, digestive, etc.
- Low fat yogurt cups and tubes, boxes of raisins, etc.
- Milk, juice boxes and water

## Between Games

Carb-loading in small to moderate amounts must begin in the dressing room immediately after the game. Replenishing carbohydrate stores is essential to peak performance in the next game. Do not wait until they are heading out the dressing room door. Ideal recovery foods include:

- Fresh or dried fruit
- Juice boxes
- Low fat yogurt
- Water is always recommended

## After Last Game

Continue carb-loading to replenish these stores. Where possible, pick restaurants that offer heart-healthy low fat, low salt meals, such as pasta dishes, stir-fry, fresh salad with low fat dressing, etc.