

Nutrition for Hockey

The goal of proper nutrition & hydration is to be able to play at your **BEST** for the **WHOLE** game or practice while lowering your chances of getting hurt and shortening the time it takes for you to be ready to play again. In other words, proper nutrition & hydration can give you a competitive edge over the other team.

How many calories you need to eat depends on how tall you are, how much you weigh, how old you are and how active you are – so it is different for everyone.

Canada's Food Guide

Canada's Food guide breaks food down into 4 food group:

- Vegetables & Fruit
- Grain Products
- Milk & alternatives
- Meat & alternatives

Vegetables & Fruit

Provide carbohydrates which are the best source of energy and are full of all kinds of vitamins & minerals.

1 serving = 1 piece of fruit, ½ cup of cooked vegetables, 1 cup of salad, ½ cup of juice

Grain Products

Also provide carbohydrates which are the best source of energy and are full of all kinds of vitamins & minerals

1 serving = 1 slice of bread, ½ a bagel, ½ a pita, ½ cup of rice, ¾ of a cup of cold cereal, ½ cup cooked pasta

Milk & Alternatives

Help build healthy bones, teeth & muscles.

1 serving = 1 cup of milk, ¾ cup of yogurt, 50 g of cheese

Meat & Alternatives

Help build healthy bones and muscles and provides fat which is needed by the body to help you grow.

1 serving = 2.5 oz of meat, fish, chicken, 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, ¼ cup of nuts or seeds, ¾ cup of legumes like kidney beans

For players 9-13 years old, Canada's Food Guide states each day you need:

- 6 servings of Vegetables & Fruit
- 6 servings of Grain Products
- 3-4 serving of Milk & Alternatives
- 1-2 serving of Meat & Alternatives

Here is an example on how to count the food groups

A chicken sandwich (2 grains, 1 meat & alternatives)

Banana (1 vegetable & fruit)

Carrots sticks (1 vegetable & fruit)

A small carton of milk (1 milk and alternatives)

Hydration

Drinking enough water, juice and milk is very important so that you can play at your best. When you exercise, you sweat which makes you lose water. If you do not drink enough to replace what you lose when you sweat, you can become dehydrated. If you are dehydrated, it lowers your ability to play at your best and can cause more serious things like heat stroke or increased risk for getting hurt.

Goalies need to drink more than other players during games and practices because they sweat more due to the heavy equipment. You should be drinking 1.7L of fluid everyday. Approximately 1 hour **before a game/practice** you should drink 500ml of fluid. **During a game/practice** you should drink 125-250ml every 15-20 min (every period). **After a game/practice** you should drink another 500ml.

Here's the secret: **Once you are thirsty, you are already slightly dehydrated.** The key is to drink throughout the game/practice, not just when you are thirsty. Practices should be stopped regularly for water breaks.

What about sports drinks?

Sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade are designed to help out during exercise and sports. They are good to help keep you hydrated and provide you with a bit of energy to help get you through the game.

They should NOT be used at other times because they contain lots of sugar and very few vitamins and minerals. Water, milk and juice are better to drink when you are not exercising.

*****Energy Drinks like Red Bull, Rock Star and Full Throttle can be dangerous and should be avoided.***

How can I tell if I am drinking enough?

How often you go to the bathroom and the color of your urine are the best ways to tell if you are drinking enough. You should be going to the bathroom about every 2 to 4 hours and your urine should be very light in color. Other signs of not drinking enough fluid (dehydration): headache, fatigue, muscle cramps.

What should I eat before the game?

- There is no magic meal but generally, it should have carbohydrate, protein and fluid:
 - Bread, a bagel, pasta, or rice (carbohydrate)
 - Cheese, peanut butter (protein)
 - Water, milk or juice (fluid)

Make sure that it is made up of familiar foods that don't upset your stomach (high fat foods like burgers & fries are not a good choice for right before a game)