Nutrition Tips for Refueling

Refueling before Exercise
Just as you put fuel in the car before going on a long drive, you need to fuel your body before you exercise. Pre-workout fuel can help:

- Prevent hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and its related symptoms of light-headedness, fatigue, lack of focus, lack of endurance, and indecisiveness
- Settle your stomach, absorb some of the gastric juices, and prevent hunger
- Fuel your muscles with carbohydrates that can be processed into stored glycogen, enter the bloodstream for quick energy, and fuel the brain
- You exercise harder, so you can burn more calories, which may result in a loss of undesired body fat

Fueling Three to Four Hours Before a Workout
Three to four hours before a workout you should have a full meal. A meal at this time allows your body to digest a more complex meal.

Examples:
- Turkey sandwich on whole grain bread, one yogurt on the side, and one fruit cocktail
- One bowl of granola with a large banana and milk
- Whole wheat pasta with meatballs, tomato sauce, and a side spinach salad

Fueling One Hour or Less Before a Workout
To fuel your body one hour or less before a workout, consider a simpler food option. Even five minutes before you exercise a small snack can be put to good use in your body. The key is selected a snack option that is easily digestible.

Examples:
- Small box of raisins with handful of almonds
- Single serving yogurt
- Chocolate milk
- Half of a granola bar with one small banana

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Refueling after Exercise

Refueling your body after a workout, practice, or game is an important part of the recovery process. What you eat after affects your recovery after today’s game and also tomorrow’s.

If you can make time to train, you can make time to refuel.

Why is refueling so important:

• Carbohydrates consumed post workout stimulates the release of insulin, a hormone that helps build muscle and transports carbohydrates into the muscles to replenish the glycogen
• Carbohydrate combined with protein (10-20g) creates an even better response, and it reduces the increase of the hormone cortisol that breaks down muscle
• Turns on your appetite again, and within an hour or so you’ll be ready for a full meal
• Aids in the recovery of the broken down muscle tissue and prevents further muscle breakdown

Refueling Within 30 Minutes or Less

Refueling your body within the first 30 minutes or less of completing a workout should not be a full meal. Strive for a mixture of carbohydrates and protein. Even a snack as few as 100 calories can make a big difference.

Examples:

• Eight ounces low fat chocolate milk
• Fruit smoothie: low fat yogurt, banana, berries
• Peanut butter and honey sandwich (half or whole)
• Small turkey wrap, eight ounces grape juice
• Sports drink with half a granola bar
• One ounce of pretzels with hummus
• Half turkey pita with eight ounces cranberry-apple juice
• Eight wheat thins with one ounce low fat cheese
• One can of chicken noodle soup

For more information on sports nutrition, visit UPMCSportsMedicine.com/Nutrition.

To schedule a sports nutrition appointment, call 724-720-3077, or email SportsNutrition@upmc.edu.