

Post-game nutrition

For athletes or individuals who regularly engage in vigorous physical activity, the post-game or post-exercise meal is one of the most important meals of the day. This is the time when you are feeding your body the nutrients that it needs to recover, and the nutrients that it will use to prepare itself for the next game or workout.

Your muscles are most responsive to nutrients during the time period following exercise. The three primary contributing factors to this are:

1. The need to repair muscle fibers
2. Increased blood flow to the muscles
3. Hormone levels

Immediately following the game it is best to consume a snack, small meal, or shake which is:

- High in carbohydrates
- Moderate in protein
- Low-Moderate in fat
- Low in fiber

This will ensure that your muscles receive the nutrients necessary to begin the recovery process. Example meals that meet this criteria are:

- Fruit smoothie with protein
- Sports beverage containing carbohydrates and protein
- Whole grain pasta with lean meat and spaghetti sauce
- Lean protein and reduced-fat cheese on whole grain bread
- Peanut butter and banana sandwich on whole grain bread
- A lean protein with brown rice or sweet potato

Approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours later, it is appropriate to consume another small meal/snack, this time centering around **complex** sources of carbohydrates like brown rice, sweet potato, oatmeal, vegetables, whole grain breads, etc. with a lean protein source to further aid the body and muscles in recovery.