HawkinsWatts
CREATIVE INGREDIENT SOLUTIONS



Sports Nutrition

WattsUp
Trend Watch Reports

Sports nutrition is the science of using food, beverages, and specialised ingredients to support performance, recovery, hydration, and overall health. While it was once focused primarily on elite athletes and bodybuilders, today's sports nutrition market serves everyone from professional competitors and gym goers to all consumers seeking daily wellness benefits.

Sports drinks are evolving beyond the athlete, becoming everyday hydration solutions that appeal to a wider range of consumers seeking convenient support for active lifestyles. At the same time, the energy drinks category is shifting towards a more holistic wellness proposition, moving beyond quick stimulation to deliver benefits such as mood support and focus. This is creating new consumption occasions, including evening formats that offer a more balanced and sustained energy experience.

Protein is playing an increasingly important role within the category, extending energy drinks into performance, recovery, and everyday nutrition. This creates opportunities to deliver greater satiety and on-the-go nutritional support, while incorporating complementary functional ingredients such as collagen to extend consumer appeal. As a result, brands are well positioned to drive greater relevance across more occasions and strengthen engagement beyond traditional energy consumption.

- 44% of Australian women who drink sports drinks say low sugar content is important vs 35% for men. (Mintel, 2025)
- 25% of global sports drink launches in 2025 were in powdered format. (Mintel, 2025)
- More than 30% of endurance athletes experience gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms. (Mintel, 2026)
- 24% of Australian women aged 18-34 years old who consume functional food and drink have consumed products with collagen vs 18% of men. (Mintel, 2025)
- 45% of UK bottled water drinkers are interested in adding supplements for extra hydration. (Mintel, 2026)

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On the Menu



Starbucks high protein lattes available in hot and cold topped with protein cold foams. (Starbucks, NZ)



Easy tiger smoothie - a mix of creatine, Greek yoghurt, A2 whey protein and electrolytes. (Erewhon, USA)



Brew me up a cold brew - a mix of caffeine and 20g of protein. (Tank, NZ)



Hydration sports drink in grape, lemon lime and mixed berry. (LVL Up Sports, USA)

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On the Shelf



Neuroscientist designed energy drink, combining a tri-biotic system with L-theanine and B vitamins to support both gut health and mental clarity in a single serve. (Arepa, NZ)



Sparkling protein soda with 15g of whey protein in lemon lime, grapefruit, black cherry and pineapple orange. (Premier Protein, USA)



Prebiotics with natural caffeine, supporting digestive wellness for active consumers seeking a performance boost. (Bloom, US)



Double textured protein and fibre stuffed balls in pistachio & chocolate, matcha & vanilla and hazelnut & chocolate. (The Protein Ball Co, UK)

"Wellness doesn't require a specific occasion: sports drink brands need to pivot to position themselves as suitable for daily hydration as part of ongoing wellness management."

-Mintel, 2026

Personalisation continues to gain momentum within sports nutrition, creating opportunities for products tailored to specific consumer needs and life stages. One emerging area of interest is female performance nutrition, with formulations designed to support the varying nutritional and physiological requirements across different phases of the menstrual cycle, helping to optimise performance, recovery, and overall wellbeing.

Gut health is also becoming an increasingly important consideration in sports performance. Consumers are seeking products that deliver effective nutrition without compromising digestive comfort, creating opportunities for improved carbohydrate delivery systems, highly digestible protein formats, and ingredient solutions that enhance nutrient absorption. Targeted functional ingredients that support gut health and gastrointestinal wellbeing can further strengthen product differentiation while addressing an important consumer need.

MINTEL tfp

HW Hawkins Watts Offerings

- Large portfolio of health & nutrition ingredients, including collagen, creatine, protein.
- Whole fruit powders and more.
- Complementary flavours & colours.
- Sweetening systems.
- Texture solutions.
- And more!

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