

AYSO

Healthy Snack Recommendations & Guidelines

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AYSO recommends that parents provide healthy snacks during practices and games to promote health and physical activity. Coaches need to be role models for players and parents. Healthy meals and snacks improve performance and lifelong eating habits. This can lead to:

- Better mental and physical performance on the field, creating an edge over the competition;
- Increased energy, endurance, ability to concentrate, and morale;
- Increased strength, speed, and stamina;
- Run faster, longer, and be injury free;
- Sick less often;
- Eating breakfast makes one less tired;
- Sleep is a key to performance. A well-rested player is more focused and less likely to make mental errors. Sleep allows muscles to develop.

Guidelines:

- 1) Eat a low fat carbohydrate with protein for breakfast
 - 2) Drink water before, during, and after practices and games
 - 3) Have a carbohydrate snack at half time
 - 4) Have a low fat carbohydrate and protein snack after practices and games
 - 5) Sports drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade are recommended for events that last 60-90 minutes or longer
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- 1) Breakfast—A wholesome breakfast that combines carbohydrate (bread, rice, cereal, grains & pasta) with a little protein refuels muscles. Cereal, pancakes, or low fat muffin with milk, granola with yogurt, toast with peanut butter, peanut butter and banana sandwich with 100% juice, granola bar, dried fruit, crackers or bagel with peanut butter (or light cream cheese), graham crackers with low-fat milk, pita bread stuffed with low-fat cheese, cottage cheese, hummus, sliced turkey, or other handy fillings, oatmeal, egg and English muffin or wrap. Avoid high-fat foods such as: bacon, sausage, croissant, biscuit combination, and doughnuts.
 - 2) Drink water before, during, and after practices and games. The body absorbs cold fluids faster than warmer ones. Coaches and parents need to have players take sips of water at these times. Young children tend to sweat less and generate more heat. Young children have a poorly developed thirst mechanism, and are more likely than older children to become dehydrated. At the end of a hot day, children can become very irritable which may be in part due to dehydration.
 - 3) Snacks during games should be mainly fluids and cut-up fruit including but not limited to: oranges, watermelon, apples or grapes.
 - 4) After game snacks should be carbohydrate-rich foods such as fruits, bagels, crackers, or small boxes of cereal. Include a small amount of protein such as: string cheese, yogurt, or peanut butter on graham crackers. Other ideas include: low fat chocolate milk (or soy milk), whole grain cereal and milk, fruit smoothie made with milk, cheese and crackers, and banana with yogurt. Carbohydrate plus protein is

the most effective way to restore glycogen stores in the muscles. Continue with water and /or 100% fruit juices to replace fluids. Junk food and other high fat foods may cause nausea and stomach upset.

- 5) Sports drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade are recommended for events that last 60-90 minutes or longer.

Additional Comments:

Pregame meals should provide lots of carbohydrates, low to moderate amounts of protein, and even less fat. Thick crust veggie pizza and pasta are examples. High fat and high-protein foods take longer to digest than carbohydrate foods and could lead to indigestion, nausea, and vomiting during the game.

Players need a steady source of fuel to keep them going not just a sugar rush. Simple carbohydrates such as regular soda and junk food do not sustain energy and may make one feel wiped out. Eating candy or soda right before a game does not provide quick energy. Complex carbohydrates provide lasting energy and are the main source of fuel.

Soda and fruit juice are not recommended before practice or a game because of the high sugar content. They empty from the stomach slowly and do not provide enough hydration. Soda can cause one to feel bloated, nauseated, cause cramps, or diarrhea.

If You're Going to Compete

Try	Instead of
Bagels	Candy Bars
Bananas	Doughnuts
100% Fruit Juice	French Fries
Low Fat Muffins	Hot Dogs
Pretzels	Nachos / Potato Chips
Sports drinks (6-8% carbohydrate such as Gatorade or Powerade) if workouts are 60-90 minutes or longer.	Soda

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