

Snacks for Young Participants in Community Sports



Good nutrition is important for everyone, especially young athletes. Offering snacks as a part of sport participation can help:

- Top-up the fuel needed by muscles — before sports and after;
- Reduce hunger;
- Celebrate a game;
- Model food choices that complement healthy exercise and good sportsmanship.

Fuel for Energy

Young athletes should be arriving at the practice or game with enough stored energy to serve them through its duration. Most of this energy comes from nutritious meals and snacks eaten **well ahead of time**.

Time of game or practice:	The energy comes from:
Early morning	Dinner the previous evening and pre-bedtime snack; small breakfast
Late morning	Early breakfast; mid-morning snack
Afternoon	Lunch
Evening	Lunch; afternoon snack

Snacks at Breaks

Most children in community sports will not require a snack at half-time. Most will need fluids at this point. Water, juices or sport drinks are all useful for rehydration.

Celebration and Recovery

The end of a game is another important time for fluids: water, juices, chocolate milk or sport drinks. Cookies and donuts, while sometimes brought to celebrate a game, are poor choices for sport recovery. They also reduce the young athlete's appetite for a healthy meal that should follow sport play. Half-time and celebration or recovery snack policies should be discussed by coaches and parents at beginning of the season.

Smart Choices

The best foods for sport snacks will help the young athlete replenish energy, fluids and other nutrients that exercise has depleted. These snacks will also offer essential nutrients that children need to stay healthy, play hard and grow well.

SNAC Sport Nutrition Advisory Committee
Comité consultatif sur la nutrition sportive



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How Do Individual Snacks Rate?

- ⇒ As fuel for sport
- ⇒ As great nutrition for an active, growing athlete
- ⇒ For good dental health
- ⇒ For a healthy environment

★★★ EXCELLENT ★★ MODEST ★ POOR

Snack	Sport Support	Overall Nutrition	Dental Health	Healthy Environment
Oranges, watermelon, etc.	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
Raisins, dried fruit	★★★	★★★	★	★★★
Chocolate milk	★★★	★★★	★★	★★
Fruit juice (tetra packs or cans)	★★★	★★	★★	★
Commercial sport drink	★★★	★	★	★
Trail mix	★★★	★★★	★★	★★
Peanuts, sunflower seeds etc., in shell	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
Cheese strings	★★	★★★	★★★	★★
Popsicles	★★	★	★★	★★★
Slushies	★★	★	★	★
Fig/Fruit Newtons	★★★	★★	★	★★
Sport bars	★★★	★★	★	★★
Sport gels	★★	★	★	★
Granola bars	★★	★★	★	★★
Home-made whole grain/nut muffins	★★	★★★	★★	★★★
Store-bought muffins/scones	★	★	★★	★★
Cream-filled cookies	★	★	★	★★
Donuts	★	★	★	★★

Being active in recreational and competitive sports helps children and teens develop lifelong healthy habits. Good nutrition not only supports physical activity, but it also enhances health and sport performances. Contact the Coaching Association of Canada for more information about how to find a [sport dietitian/nutritionist](#) to work with young and “older” athlete(s).

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