

WHEN TO EAT?

The average stomach requires about three to four hours to empty its contents, depending on what and how much was eaten. In an ideal situation, a child athlete should not go more than four hours without eating. Within the normal waking hours for most children, 3 meals and 1-2 snacks should be consumed throughout the day. Going for long periods of time without eating may cause energy levels to drop and encourage binge eating. Without eating ever 3-4 hours, a child's muscles typically do not get the fuel they need to repair, which results in less than desirable recovery and possible growth or developmental delays.

Read below for some pre-, during and post-event tips.

Pre-event

The ideal pre-event snack should contain 300-500 calories primarily from complex carbohydrates rather than simple carbohydrates, as they burn slower. The meal should also contain small amounts of protein and healthy fat to sustain energy during the competition. The pre-event meal should be eaten at least 1.5-2 hours before competition to allow proper digestion. This may vary depending on the amount of nervousness the athlete may feel in his/her stomach. The youth athlete should drink at least 1-2 cup (8-16 oz.) of water an hour before exercise, and 4-6oz 15 minutes prior to maintain optimal hydration. Here are some examples of pre-event meals:

- Low-fat yogurt and a whole wheat or rye bagel with cream cheese
- Apple slices with peanut butter and 100% fruit juice
- Low-fat cottage cheese, grapes or peaches and unsweetened juice
- Turkey sandwich on rye bread (small serving)



During an event

Athletes get tired after 1-3 hours of continuous moderate to high intensity exercise. You could possibly delay fatigue by 30-60 minutes by giving your athlete sources of carbohydrates during exercise or rest periods. A cup of sports drink should be consumed every 15 to 30 minutes during long bouts of exercise, which will help replenish fluids and carbohydrates. Sports bars, granola bars and fruit are examples of small digestible snacks that may be used to replace carbohydrates between routines.

Post-event

During the first 30 minutes after exercise, an athlete's body can take in and utilize nutrients better than waiting for longer periods of time. Therefore, a recovering athlete should have a healthy post-game meal or snack as soon as possible. An immediate post-game snack of fruit, granola bars or sports bars will aid in immediate replacement of carbohydrates used during the event. If you have an athlete who is not hungry right after exercise, encourage him/her to drink sports drinks, juice boxes, or low fat chocolate milk until the desire for eating returns. A full post-event meal should consist of complex carbohydrates and proteins to aid in restoring and repairing his/her young body.

Incorporating small healthy snacks throughout the day controls your appetite and promotes growth and recovery. Add small snacks (100-300 calories) to your daily caloric total. Make sure your snacks contain healthy servings from various food groups from the Food Guide Pyramid (see MyPyramid on page 32).

Nutrition

HEALTHY SNACKING

Proper planning by parents and coaches ensures that athletes won't be tempted to snack from the vending machine or concession stand. Plan to bring snacks that contain healthy servings from various food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid (www.mypyramid.gov).

NUTRITION CHALLENGE

What types of food are better-choice snacks for on the go or at competitions? Incorporate healthy snacks from the various groups of the Food Guide Pyramid, where you can get ideas of natural, colorful food sources within the food groups. Healthy snacks include:

- Portable lowfat yogurt
- Cottage cheese with fruit and/or fruit cups
- Peanut butter on whole wheat toast and half an apple
- Baby carrots, celery
- Whole-grain, ready-to-eat cereal with low-fat or skim milk
- Animal crackers and a box of raisins
- Teddy Grahams
- Fatfree pudding cups
- String cheese
- One slice whole wheat pita bread with 1 oz. sliced turkey breast and mustard
- 1/2 oz. baked tortilla chips with 2 tbsp salsa
- Fig Newtons
- 1/2 whole wheat toasted bagel (4-inch diameter) with 1 tbsp sugar-free jam
- 3-4 cups microwave popcorn
- Lowfat pudding and 100 percent, no-sugar added apple juice



Approx. calories: 100	Approx. calories: 200	Approx. calories: 300
Try these snacks when you're not extremely hungry, but you'd like a little something.	Try these ideas for small meals before early morning workouts or between lunch and dinner	Try these snacks to give yourself a boost before an afternoon workout or following one.
1 large apple	1/2 bagel with 1 tbsp light cream cheese	1 large handful of trail mix
1 medium banana	1 cup vanilla soy milk with half banana	energy bar (watch out for fat content!)
string cheese	cereal bar and 4 oz. orange juice	1 cup yogurt with 1/4 cup grape-nuts
9 baby carrots with hummus	1 cup low fat milk and two Oreos	Hummus in a whole wheat pita
1 small waffle	4 oz. pudding and two sugar-free cookies	Peanut butter sandwich on raisin toast
3 cups of light microwave popcorn	1 medium apple and 1 oz. cheddar cheese	1 cup of hot chocolate and 1 1/2 graham crackers
1/2 Pop-Tart	English muffin with 1 tbsp peanut butter	
1 cup skim milk		
1 fun-size candy bar		
1 mini box of cereal		
1 ca		
1 sq		

