



A monthly publication provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education.

Resources for Families

November 2012

Nutrition tips for active kids

The easiest meal for active kids is often the one they can grab on the go, and that often means fast food. But too much junk food — even for very active kids and athletes — is unhealthy.

Between the time crunch of getting from sport to school to home and celebratory treats that are part of the team experience, and the benefits of all of that activity diminish quickly.

How much food does your child need

According to the *New York Times Well* blog (<http://nyti.ms/S2K7XA>), part of the problem is that kids and their parents tend to overestimate the number of calories active children need.

“Studies show that more than one in four youth sport participants are overweight and half of youths who are obese say they participate in a sport.”

According to Dr. Marion Nestle, a professor of nutrition and public health at New York University, the problem is greatest for the youngest students. “They’re not yet exercising as much, and they’re not growing as much,” she said.

Quality of food is important

The quality of the food is also a concern. Fast food does not provide the necessary nutrition. According to the blog, active teenage girls should eat at least one and a half cups of fruit and two and a half cups of vegetables each day as part of a recommended calorie budget of about 2,400 per day.

Active teen boys should eat two cups of fruit and three cups of vegetables daily within a total daily calorie count of about 3,000. Younger children require few calories.

Canada’s Food Guide puts a similar emphasis on fruits and vegetables. Boys and girls aged four through eight require five servings each day, and kids aged nine to 18 require 6-7 servings per day.

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/basics-base/quantit-eng.php

Fitting in meals between games and practices is not easy. Planning ahead is key to better nutrition for active children.

Nutrition tips

The following nutrition tips for young athletes are from SportsNutritionAuthority.com

- A balanced healthy diet should include a variety of lean proteins, fruits and vegetables and dairy.
- Students should not take supplements or steroids.
- Students should never participate in an extreme diet. A lack of proper nutrients could result in decreased energy, muscle loss and possibly other health problems.
- Hydrate before and during practices and games. Drink water, not caffeine and sugary drinks.
- Plan a meal approximately two to four hours before practice or game activity. Make sure the meal is not too large.
- Light snacks before a game should include fruit, crackers or yogurt.

Additional recommendations are based on individual needs. Because body sizes and activity levels vary from person-to-person, you need to alter your diet to fit your individual needs.