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Fueling Active Kids – What you need to know!

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The birds are chirping, the snow is gone, it's soon going to be summertime! For many parents that means heading out to the sports fields to watch their kids have fun playing their favorite sport.

Being part of a team often means parents taking turns to bring a team “snack”. The act of kids snacking during or after recreational sports brings up the question of whether or not kids even burn enough calories to warrant the often high calorie/sugar snacks that are offered. If you do find yourself looking for snack options why not take some healthier ones. Here are some ideas that will keep kids on the right track to balance physical activity with fluid and energy needs, while keeping nutrition top of mind.

Beverages: It's important to keep hydrated when being active and in hot weather. Unless your child is playing at an elite level for a prolonged period of time (more than one hour of continuous activity) they do not need sports drinks. *Plain water* is an ideal choice that will provide all the hydration they need.

Snacks: Skip the donuts, cookies, bars and popsicles -- these choices don't provide much in the way of nutrients and are often high in calories and added sugar.

Instead consider these options:

- Orange slices
- Berries
- Apple wedges
- Grapes
- Watermelon slices
- Whole grain dry cereal
- Cucumber slices
- Carrot sticks
- Melon balls/chunks



In addition to being lower in calories than items like donuts and cookies, these options also help kids get more fruit, vegetables and fibre in their day and are less likely to take away from the child being hungry for their next mealtime.

Source(s):

<http://ottawahealth.tumblr.com/post/13636923303/myths-and-facts-about-physical-activity-that-all>

<http://coach.ca/fuel-for-fun-healthy-snacks-for-active-kids--p154664&language=en>

5 Steps to Healthy Eating for Children Aged 4-11, Factsheet. Dietitians of Canada/Penn. 2014.

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