

Healthy Eating For Active Youth



Photo: www.flickr.com/photos/8598276@N07/3991890904

Here are a few tips on what to eat and drink before, during and after intense physical activity and sport.

Before:

- Sip on water throughout the day and before your activity.
- Eat enough food to fuel muscles and brains for good mental and physical performance. (Eating too much, however, can cause stomach upset).
- Eat *high carbohydrate foods* with *some protein* 1-3 hours before activity to give you the energy you need. Some good 'pre-activity' choices include oatmeal with nuts or seeds (e.g. flax), low fat yogurt and fruit, pasta with tomato meat sauce, or an egg and toast.
- Avoid foods high in fat (e.g. fries, chips, chocolate bars, store bought muffins, hot dogs, etc.) and high in fibre (e.g. beans, bran cereal or muffins, etc.) right before activity to prevent developing gas and an upset stomach.

Energy drinks are not recommended for youth before, during or after exercise as they may interfere with performance and health.

During:

- Satisfy your thirst with *water*. Water is usually all that is needed for activities lasting one hour or less. For vigorous activity lasting longer than one hour, or activity in hot temperatures, a store-bought or homemade sport drink may be beneficial – otherwise sport drinks just provide extra sugar and salt that we don't need.

After:

- Drink plenty of water after activity to prevent dehydration and help with recovery.
- Have a mixture of *foods that contain carbohydrate and protein* within 30 minutes of activity to help replenish energy stores and repair lean tissue (muscle).
- Examples of foods to eat after activity include milk, fruit and yogurt smoothies, cottage cheese and fruit, and a homemade whole grain muffin and cheese.

Make the healthy choice the easy choice

Help support active youth to make healthy food and beverage choices before, during and after activity, by having healthy options available in recreation facilities, at tournaments, and at sporting events. For more on hosting healthy sporting events visit: everactive.org/hosting-healthy-sporting-events/