

Highlands Performance Volleyball Nutrition: Jennifer Egeland, MS, RND, LD

Fueling Snacks for Active Kids

Snacks serve several purposes for active kids, like:

- Providing energy (calories) to help working muscles power through activity,
- Supplying fluids for hydration and to keep the body cool,
- Providing nutrients for growth and development,
- Promoting recovery after hard exercise.

In addition, snacks should be easily digested so blood flows to the muscles during exercise and not to the gut in order to digest a heavy, greasy snack.

Here is a guide to choosing snacks based on game day and time.

After School Games

Many kids have early lunch periods during school, so they might start the game hungry. A good after school snack provides quality carbohydrates and protein for quick energy and a satisfied tummy.

- 6-ounce cartons of a variety of fruited yogurt or yogurt in a tube.
- Peanut butter or almond butter sandwiches with natural fruit jam
- Turkey and/or cheese wraps cut into 1-inch slices for easy finger food.
- Low-fat string cheese and mini pretzels.
- Bottles of cold water or pitchers of cold water with lemon (cold water helps lower body temperature in active athletes).

Weekend Morning Games

Muscle fuel can be very low after an overnight fast. Therefore, if you are rushing out the door to make it to a morning game, consider serving breakfast foods that kids love:

- A mini cinnamon-raisin bagel with flavored cream cheese.
- English muffin sandwich with a slice of lean ham and/or reduced-fat cheese.
- Vanilla Greek yogurt with a variety of toppings (homemade granola, chopped almonds or walnuts, or dried fruit).
- Yogurt smoothies in a variety of flavors.
- Cartons of low-fat milk with baggies full of cereal.
- 100-percent fruit juice boxes.

After the Game

After the game snacks should help to replace muscle fuel lost in exercise and replenish fluids without ruining their appetite for the next meal. Consider:

- Air-popped popcorn sprinkled with Parmesan cheese.
- Low-fat chocolate milk.
- Banana, orange slices and/or apple slices (dipped in orange juice to prevent browning).
- Fig, blueberry or strawberry bars.