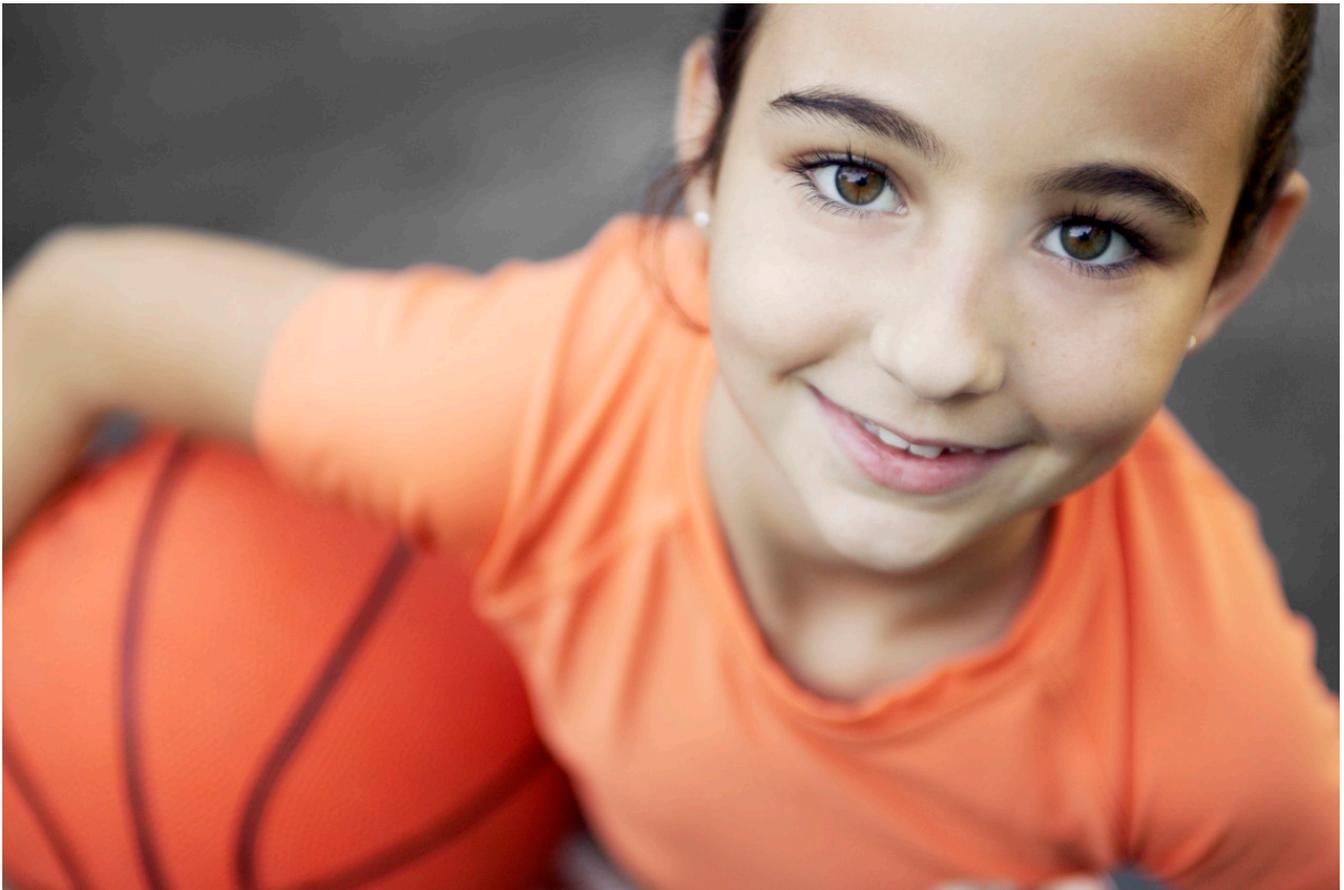




Sport Nutrition for Active Kids!

Eating well plays a critical role in keeping sports fun and safe! This is especially true for highly active kids.



Helping your child to take in enough fluids, balanced pre-exercise meals and snacks, and encouraging them to avoid sport supplements will help keep them healthy and in the game.

Fluids: Wetter is Better

Taking in enough water and other fluids is key to good sport performance. Water helps to cool the body during sport and also transports nutrients through the body.

- Children have relatively high fluid needs. For example, nine- to 13-year-old children who are not overly active at least 2.1 to 2.4 litres of fluid each day. Active children will need more than these amounts.
- Children don't always know that they are thirsty. As a result, they may not take in enough water. Intense physical activity can also blunt or tone down feelings of thirst, making it especially challenging for active children to drink enough.
- Fight dehydration (or a lack of fluid) by encouraging your child to drink water before during and after sport.
Give your children a water bottle to sip from when they are not active. Encourage your children to bring a water bottle to all exercise or sporting activities. Remind them to take a break every 10 to 15 minutes when they're exercising to drink. Make sure that water is available after games or practices.
- Water works! Plain, cool water is the best source of fluid during sports or other activities that last less than one hour. Fluid replacement beverages or sport drinks can be used during intense sports or activities that last more than one hour. Keep in mind that these drinks are high in sugar and shouldn't be offered when your child is not active.
- Discuss the symptoms of dehydration (or lack of fluid) with your child. Common symptoms include headache, fatigue, thirst, nausea, vomiting, chills and feeling faint.

If your child has these symptoms, he or she should tell the coach and stop playing or exercising.



Eat Smart Before You Start

- Food helps to fuel physical activity. Help your active child play hard by offering meals and snacks based on Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide most of the time.
- Choose a healthy pre-exercise snack to promote endurance. Follow the guidelines of the American College of Sport Medicine and encourage your child to choose a healthy meal or snack two to four hours before their favourite activity.

- Make the best of it. Choose foods that are high in carbohydrates and low in fat, sugar and salt. Protein can be included (just keep the overall amounts relatively small, as protein can be slow to digest).
Healthy examples include low-fibre cereal with milk and fruit; a granola bar with yogurt and a banana; a turkey sandwich on whole-wheat bread; a glass of milk and an apple.
- Nerves a problem? Some children get nervous just before a big game or competition and can't stomach solid foods. Take a calming time out. Offer your child a smoothie made with yogurt, fruit and milk or juice as an alternative to solid food choices.

Say “No” to Sport Supplements

Young athletes often want to try sport supplements and energy drinks that promise to enhance sport performance.

Remind your child that most of these products do not significantly improve performance and that some are dangerous.

As an alternative to using sport supplements, encourage your child to train hard, eat well and get enough rest. These are tried and true solutions that athletes of all ages can use to perform at their best.

When it comes to sports, highly active kids have special needs. Help your child perform at his or her best during sport by making sure water is always available, providing healthy pre-exercise meals and snacks and discouraging sport supplements and energy drinks.

Learn More

[Foods and Fluids For Active Bodies](#)

Learn more about healthy food choices that will help your young athlete get ready to compete.

[Sport Nutrition for Parents of Young Athletes](#)

SportMedBC provides parents with practical tips for healthy eating and fluid intake in young athletes.

<http://www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyEating/681.htm>