

# NUTRITION FOR TOURNAMENTS

## Fueling the Young Athlete



**Competition season has begun!** As tournament time begins, the young athlete can use nutrition to help stay fueled and running strong. The best approach to good nutrition is planning ahead. From weekly meal and snack shopping to discussing the daily eating schedule, parents and young athletes can work together to help establish good nutrition habits. Athletes need food that provides them energy **quickly** while they are on the go and also **sustains** them over long hours. In many cases, particularly in warm environments or with long workouts, their food needs to hydrate them at the same time.

Below are some suggestions for healthy snacks and beverages that are simple to prepare, easy to carry and provide the quick fuel and sustained energy athletes need for long tournament days. Remember, best snack timing may vary with each athlete.

### QUICK ENERGY

**These foods contain primarily carbohydrates that fuel the brain and muscles quickly. Some have electrolytes that help replace those lost in sweat during long workouts. These are best consumed 15 to 60 minutes before game time.**

#### **In a cooler:**

- To-go fruit squeeze pouches
- Fresh fruit smoothies
- Fresh fruits (like grapes, watermelon or apple slices)
- Mini bottles of sports drinks

#### **Without a cooler:**

- Pretzels or other salty crackers (especially if extra sodium is needed)
- Dried fruit (like apples, apricots or cherries)
- Dry whole grain cereal (low in fat and fiber)
- Fresh fruits (like grapes, watermelon or apple slices)
- Low-fiber, low-fat granola and fig bars
- Jam sandwich

### SUSTAINED ENERGY

**These foods contain carbohydrates, protein and a little fat, providing lasting fuel to the brain and muscles. These are best consumed 1.5 to 3 hours before a game.**

#### **In a cooler:**

- Turkey & cheese pita
- Turkey, tomato & hummus wrap
- Bowl of whole grain cereal & low-fat milk
- Low-fat Greek yogurt topped with fruit & low-fat granola
- Hummus & whole grain crackers
- Low-fat milk or chocolate milk
- String cheese & crackers
- Low-fat yogurt (plain or with fruit)

#### **Without a cooler:**

- Peanut butter & banana sandwich
- Crackers topped with peanut butter & a strawberry or banana slice
- Homemade trail mix (nuts, whole grain cereal & dried fruit)
- Granola bars with protein
- Popcorn
- Apple & peanut butter
- Pre-packaged oatmeal packets (if a microwave is available) & fruit
- Pasta salad made with tomatoes, cucumbers & olives, tossed with olive oil & balsamic vinegar
- Single-serving tuna packs with whole grain crackers

### HYDRATION SNACKS

**These foods have additional water content that helps supplement water breaks and keep athletes hydrated.**

- Low-fat yogurt
- Smoothies
- Applesauce
- Chocolate milk
- Fresh fruit (like grapes, strawberries, pineapple or peaches)
- Fresh vegetable slices (like carrots, bell peppers or cucumbers)

