



It's great that there are so many opportunities for our children to be involved in sports.

They benefit from the physical activity, the self-discipline, learning new skills, the stress release, the socialization, and from just having a great time.

These days there's a downside to being involved in sports though. Almost every time kids practice or play a game – whatever their age – they are offered fake foods and drinks. Well-meaning parents and coaches hand out sports drinks, juice and desserts in the name of snacks.

Unfortunately for our children, they are being loaded up with empty calories – nothing but sugar, enriched flour and artificial ingredients. Most kids, especially young ones, are not out there working up a sweat. Even if they are working hard, it's for a short amount of time. The calories getting consumed usually exceed the calories a child expends during the athletic activity.

The benefits of the physical activity are being negatively countered with the Fake Food ingredients that are actually proven to rob our kids of their health.

Kids see other kids and their favorite athletes carrying around 16 oz. bottles of the fluorescent sports drinks and brightly colored packaged foods, and of course they want some too. **But the bottom line is these Fake Foods are a bad habit that contribute to poor health over time.**

Children do not understand the negative impact – short and long-term – of the fake foods they are eating so frequently. As adults, we don't even know yet all the ramifications of our children eating so much processed food. It is our job to do our best to feed our children foods that we know contribute to health, happiness and success. Changing what we offer our children for sports snacks is a big step in the right direction.

What You Can Do as A Parent Or Coach

- 1. Don't buy into the hype. Stop buying sports drinks for your child or players, including the 'healthy' versions. Offer water.
- 2. Drink water yourself throughout the day and especially during practices and games. Kids need healthy role models.
- 3. Make sure your child or players drinks plenty of water every day and more on practice and game days.
- 4. Explain to your child or players that when athletes give their bodies REAL foods and drinks (made with ingredients your grandma could have had in her kitchen) they perform better.
- 5. Parents, feed your child about an hour before a practice or game. Include Powerful Protein, Friendly Fats and Colorful Carbs in the form of whole grains and vegetables.
- 6. Parents, if your child participates in strenuous physical activity, offer a healthy snack within 30 minutes after playing to help refuel muscles.
- 7. Coaches, ask parents to focus on healthy snacks and water. Provide them with a list of ideas or a copy of this newsletter.
- 8. Parents, give your child a limit to how many team snacks she can have during a season and then pack a snack for your child on the other days. Explain to your child that healthy people have to make choices and cannot eat everything offered or they will not be healthy and fit.
- 9. Parents, set an example and bring healthy snacks for the team on your day. Don't worry about how your child or others will respond. Offer healthy snacks and let kids accept them, or say "No, thank you."

Should My Child Drink Sports Drinks? By Susan McCreddie, M.D. Pediatrician

Parents often ask me whether I approve of their children drinking sports drinks. My short answer is no. Sports drinks are sugar, water and salt. **Most sports drinks have between 13 and 19 grams of sugar [equivalent to 3 to 5 packets of sugar] per 8 oz serving!** In addition to the sugar, sport drinks are often loaded with artificial colorings, sweeteners, flavorings and other fake ingredients that burden your child's body.

Parents often follow-up with, "But doesn't my child need these drinks while playing sports? Don't they need to rehydrate with fluid and electrolytes [water and salt]?" **The answer is no - water is all they need.** Replacing electrolytes is only necessary if your child is involved in strenuous physical activity for **more than** 90 minutes (some experts say more than 5 or 6 hours). Remember to count the minutes of continuous exercise - that means the number of minutes your child is in the game and moving, not on the sidelines. The vast majority of children are not participating in continuous exercise for more than 90 minutes at a time.

Your child does not need to drink sports drinks – they burden his body with artificial ingredients, sugar and too many calories. So cut your grocery bill! Water is the way to go.

Label Reading 101

Serving Size 4 oz. (113g)
Servings Per Container 4

Check the serving size on packaged foods. Next see how many grams of sugar are in **each** serving. Every 4 grams equals one packet (1 tsp.) of sugar. Many packaged foods kids are eating contain 8 or more packets of sugar per serving. That is a sure recipe for poor health.

- o 24 oz. Gatorade = 10 ½ packets of sugar
- o 12 oz. Can of Pepsi = 9 packets of sugar
- o 20 oz. Vitamin Water = 8 1/2 packets of sugar
- o 6.75 oz. HiC Fruit Drink = 5 packets of sugar
- o 6.75 oz. Capri Sun Sport = 4 packets of sugar.

Often beverages are considered 2½ servings. Because kids drink the whole beverage they are consuming 2½ times the calories, sugar and other fake food ingredients.

Did you know sugar can compromise the immune system for 5-6 hours after consumption?

“A Report from the University of California Berkley warns that inactive students who drink one 20-ounce sports drink every day for a year may gain 13 pounds. Considering the ingredients this comes as no surprise.”

Jorg Mardian, Registered Nutritionist and Personal Trainer



For Our Children's Health, Stop Serving Snacks With:

- High Fructose Corn Syrup
- Artificial Colors
- Artificial Sweeteners, including Splenda or Sucralose
- Artificial Flavors
- Enriched Flour
- Partially Hydrogenated Oils or Trans-fats
- More than 12 grams of Sugar per Serving (equal to 3 packets of sugar)
- Vegetable Oils: Canola, Safflower, Sunflower (hard to avoid these, but try your best!)
- Ingredients Your Grandma would not have had in her kitchen!

Check Packaged Food Labels on:

- Cookies & Baked Goods
- Crackers & Pretzels
- Cereals
- Trail Mixes
- Granola Bars
- Sports Drinks
- 'Health' Drinks (VitaminWater and Gatorade)
- And, all other foods you are considering for sports snacks.

And, Instead Serve REAL Food Snacks Such As:

- Fruit: Apples, Bananas, Mandarin Oranges, Pears, Berries, Kiwi – Served Whole, Sliced, Dried, Mixed, or as Kabobs
- String Cheese or Fruit & Cheese Kabobs
- Carrots and Ranch or Hummus Dip
- Apples or Celery with Nut Butter and Raisins
- Bite-Sized Sandwiches: Turkey, Cheese, Nut Butter and 100% Fruit Spread
- Hard-Boiled Eggs
- Mini-Pizzas on Whole Grain English Muffin
- Apple or Pear Sauce with No Additives
- Whole-Grain Muffins and Cookies
- Trail Mix with Fresh or Dried Fruit, Seeds, Nuts and Dark Chocolate Chips
- Granola Bars without Fake Food ingredients

Check Labels on Packaged Foods and if it includes the Fake Food ingredients listed to the left, leave the food on the shelf and find a healthier substitute. Feeding our children well takes a little more time and sometimes a little more money, but our children are worth it. Teaching them healthier habits and feeding their bodies for health, happiness and success is part of our responsibility as parents and adults who care about children.