



Food & Fitness: Build a Healthy Lifestyle

Feeding young athletes

Team sports are a great way for youth to get the exercise they need. The right foods and proper hydration will help them stay healthy and perform at their optimum. *Go team!*

Before the Game

Two to three hours before exercise, have a light meal that is high in carbohydrates, low to moderate in protein, and low in fat. Drink at least 8 ounces of water or fruit juice with your meal.

Light meal ideas

- Fruits and 100% fruit juices
- Musubi (either plain, with ume (pickled plum), tuna or thin slices of luncheon meat)
- Poi
- Lower fat sandwiches like tuna, turkey, and egg. Go easy on the mayonnaise or use low fat mayo.
- Macaroni or potato salad, made with less mayo or low fat mayo.
- Fruit and low fat yogurt
- Pasta

If your athlete does not want to eat at this time, offer water, low fat milk or fruit juice.

During the Game

- Make sure water, diluted fruit juice, or a sports drink is readily available.
- A personal water bottle labeled for each child can encourage drinking.

Half-time Refreshments

- Water
- Orange slices, grapes, bananas or watermelon
- High carbohydrate sports bars are okay, but have one with a lot of water. For example, a one-ounce bar should be consumed with at least 10 fluid ounces of water.

After Game Snacks

- Plenty of fluids: water or 100% fruit juices
- Same foods as before the game—check out the light meal ideas

Veggie up your meals

- Add extra vegetables to kids' favorite one pot dishes such as spaghetti sauce and chili by adding chopped tomato, eggplant, onion, celery, cabbage, carrot or red peppers.
- On a frozen cheese pizza, add slices of fresh tomatoes or red peppers, spinach, mushrooms and broccoli. For meat lovers, try toppings such as BBQ chicken or chopped turkey.

Fruits for any time of day

- Add bananas or fresh strawberries to your cereal and pancakes.
- Freeze extra fruit while in season and make smoothies any time of the year.
- Have "ready to eat" cut up fruits available in the refrigerator.
- Explore new fruits together by having a family taste testing party or "guess the fruit" game. Have fun together!

Mahalo to Dr. Alan Tichenal, instructor and sports nutritionist with the University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources for his help with this article.

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Try these fruit and vegetable recipes created by Hawaii's 4-H members:

Devin's Onolicious Smoothie (Kona 4-H, age 7)

- 2 cups juice (any flavor)
- 2 cups frozen fruits (i.e. banana, mango, papaya, strawberry)
- 1-8 oz. yogurt (any flavor)

Place juice, fruits, and yogurt in a blender. Blend until smooth and serve. Yummy!

Note: You may substitute fresh fruits for frozen fruits. If using fresh fruits, be sure to use ice to make the drink frosty. If you have an abundance of fruits, freeze them to use in the smoothie.

Kendra's Delicious Super Salad (Kauai 4-H, age 8)

- 1 head of lettuce (your favorite kind), tear into bite size pieces
- 1 head of broccoli, cut into bite size pieces and blanched
- 6 string beans, cut into one inch pieces and blanched
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 1 bunch alfalfa sprouts
- 3 Tbs. sunflowers seeds
- 1/4 cup croutons
- 1 tomato, cut into wedges

In a salad bowl add lettuce, broccoli, beans, carrots and alfalfa sprouts. Toss gently. Top with sunflower seeds and croutons. Arrange tomato wedges on top to decorate. Serve with your favorite salad dressing!

Note: Kendra created this salad using her favorite vegetables & toppings. Have your child create their personal favorite in the same way! He/She will be proud and probably eat it too!

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