

GIVE YOUR CHILD IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS WHEN HE EXERCISES

Exercise plays a big part in your child's life during his school years. But did you know that when your child exercises his need for food increases as well?

Below you will find a few nutrients that play an important role in your child's physical performance:

Carbohydrates: Considered the main energy source for the body, carbohydrates, should constitute more than half of your child's ingested daily calories. It is recommended that you give him carbohydrates that are complex and slowly absorbed which can be found in foods like breads, pasta, rice and potatoes. And these are important in stabilizing blood sugar as they comprise a slow and continuous source of energy for sports performance.

WHAT TO GIVE YOUR CHILD DURING LONG EXERCISE SESSIONS

If the exercise session is a long one, then it is advisable to give your child sugary beverages, such as sports drinks. He should drink them every 15-20 minutes, so that he can maintain his glycogen stores in the muscles and liver.

Proteins: Sports help build your child's muscles and it's one of the reasons why your child needs protein. If you have an exercising child, then he would require about 1 to 1.2 gram of protein per kg of body weight. This is normally achieved when the diet contains 10-15% of the calories from proteins.

It is important to note that your child gets his proteins from a variety of sources (animal and plant sources), so he should not only have plant sources (legumes, starches) but also meat, eggs, and milk and dairy products. So if your child drinks 1 glass of milk in the morning, eats an egg then has rice with meat and vegetables for lunch and a cheese sandwich for dinner, he will meet his protein requirement for the day.

Fats: Fats should consist of 25-30% of the calories consumed by the child. Sports lead to fat-burning especially when your child is doing a low to moderate activity and when he is performing exercise for long periods of time. So your athletic child would require moderate amount of fats from vegetable sources like olive oil, olives, nuts and avocados.

SPORTS TIPS

- Give your child his meal 2 to 3 hours prior to exercising
- Make sure he drinks water when exercising
- Provide him with sugary drinks during long exercise sessions
- Ensure he consumes slowly absorbed complex carbohydrates between exercise sessions