

Healthy Eating

Playbook For Coaches





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Why Promote Healthy Food Choices to Your Team?

Coaches are key role models for children and youth. The popularity of sports in communities provides a great opportunity for coaches to promote healthy eating with physical activity.

Sports teams promote physical activity, but may not always offer healthy food choices. Offering healthy food choices can help children play at their best!

The benefits of eating well and being active include:

- A lower risk of developing obesity, which increases the risk for chronic diseases (Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, sleep apnea and other breathing problems, certain types of cancer, and osteoporosis)
- A healthy body weight
- More energy
- Stronger muscles, joints and bones (Health Canada, 2013)

We invite you, as a coach, to explore this guide and consider making changes in your coaching role to include promoting healthy eating. Small changes over time can have a positive effect on children's health. You can make a difference that can last a child's lifetime.

Research tells us that:

- In the past 25 years, obesity rates among Canadian children and youth have nearly tripled. Almost one in every three 5-17 year old children in Ontario is now at an unhealthy weight (Healthy Kids Panel, 2013; Statistics Canada-CHMS, 2012).
- Childhood obesity is linked to the over-consumption of added sugar in processed food and sugary beverages like fruit-flavoured juice, soft drinks, and sports/energy drinks (Health Canada, 2013; Healthy Kids Panel 2013).
- Children and youth who ate fruit and vegetables at least five times a day were less likely to be overweight or obese than those who ate these foods less often (Shields, 2004).
- Childhood is an important time for learning about healthy eating. Food choices and behaviours are established and influenced in all places that kids live, learn, and play (Roberts, Di Ruggiero, Connolly and Innes, 2005, Healthy Kids Panel, 2013).



Looking For Ways to Get Your Team Started?

1. Assess: How does your team support healthy eating?

Do you:

- provide or promote healthy snacks for athletes during practices and games? (Appendix 1)
- encourage athletes to bring healthy food choices from home?
- promote healthy food choices from the concessions or vending machines? (Appendix 1)
- promote water to drink instead of sweetened or energy drinks during and after the game?
- have a healthy eating guideline or policy within your sports association and/or team? (Appendix 2)
- look for opportunities to learn more about healthy eating for yourself?
- Visit durham.ca/healthyeating
- look for opportunities to teach your athletes about the importance of healthy eating?
- role model healthy eating by choosing healthy snacks and beverages for yourself?
- provide healthy food choices when hosting a team event, celebration or meeting?
- use healthy fundraising? (Appendix 3)
- avoid offering food or beverages as a reward for good behaviour, achievement, or participation?
- practice safe food handling and an allergy-safe environment?



2. **Develop a plan: What can your team do to promote healthy eating?**

Identify areas to improve your team's nutrition and come up with some specific actions to achieve your goal. Make sure to include the athletes and their parents in your planning.

- What are your priorities?
- What will be the easiest changes to make? Why?
- Which will be the hardest changes to make? Why?
- Which changes can we do now, in 6 months, in one year?

3. **Evaluate your plan**

- Consider your team's goals, reflect on your achievements, what you have learned and identify next steps
- Do you find that your players are bringing healthy snacks or meals to team events/activities/tournaments?
- Is your plan making a difference in how and what your team eats and drinks?

4. **Celebrate your successes!**

- Celebrate your hard work and dedication
- Recognize those involved (e.g. certificates)



Public Health Nurses are available to assist with your plans. Contact the Durham Health Connection Line 905-666-6241 or 1-800-841-2729

Appendix 1



Healthy Snack Checklist

Before you pack snacks for your kids and the team, review this list:

- Nutritious – Try vegetables, fruit, whole grains or low fat milk or cheese
- Water – It is the best thirst quencher. More water is needed by the body when active or in hot weather. Add fruit slices for flavour
- Food safety – Prepare food on clean surfaces with clean hands and utensils. Pack food in an air tight container with ice packs to help insulate and keep cold foods cold
- Food allergies – Please avoid the following foods/ingredients : _____

Quick and Healthy Team Snacks

- Water is the best thirst quencher
- Fresh Fruit (eg: bananas, watermelon, orange or apple slices)
- Lower fat cheese strings (20% milk fat (M.F.) or less)
- Yogurt tubes (cold or frozen)
- Individual containers of cottage cheese or yogurt (2% milk fat (M.F.) or less)
- Fruit cups (packed in water, or juice)
- Granola bars or fruit bars (less than 3g fat) with high fibre (more than 2g fibre)
- Low-fat pudding (made with skim, 1% or 2% milk)
- Home made trail mix (eg. a variety of crunchy, whole grain cereals with dried fruit, served in baggies or paper cups)



Adapted from a resource produced by the City of Hamilton Public Health Services. Distributed by the Durham Region Health Department.

Appendix 2



Healthy Food Choices Policy

Having a clear healthy food choices policy will help to create a healthy eating culture in children's community sports. This will give the same messages about healthy eating that children learn from their school and at home.

What is a Healthy Food Choices Policy?

A healthy food choices policy is a guideline that addresses when and what foods and beverages are offered or sold at a community sporting event.

Benefits of a Healthy Food Choices Policy

For Coaches/Sport Administrators

- Shows parents and the local community that the team/league values the health of its members
- Clearly states your team's/league's position about healthy eating
- Presents healthy eating messages that support physical activity and enhance health and sport performances
- Takes the guesswork out of choosing food and beverages for sporting events
- Creates consistency from year to year
- Clarifies expectations of sports administrators/coaches, players, and parents/caregivers

For Parents/Caregivers

- Ensures healthy food choices will be offered on a regular basis
- Offers parents consistent messages about what to send for sporting events
- Helps parents learn about healthy eating through the team/league and their own children
- Supports families and individuals to make healthy food choices
- Can reduce conflict between individuals by providing clear expectations for the entire team

For Children

- Increases availability of nutritious foods
- Exposes children to positive role models for healthy eating
- Delivers consistent messages that reinforce school learning
- Provides children with the opportunity to develop skills in making healthy food choices
- Makes the healthy food choice the easier choice

Adapted from a resource produced by the City of Hamilton Public Health Services.
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Appendix 2 (cont'd)



Sample Healthy Food Choices Policy

Policy

_____ team is committed to creating an environment that is supportive of healthy eating and role modelling positive behaviours to our community.

Policy Goal

To improve the health of the team by creating an environment that is supportive of healthy eating.

Communication of Policy:

- New members will be informed of this policy
- The policy will be included in the first schedules/notices so all new and returning participants know about the policy. Participants include parents/guardians, coaches/leaders and officials/managers
- The policy will be visible throughout the year/season using various methods to share messages, including posting on our website, newsletters, and handouts

Guiding Principles:

Coaches are responsible for:

- Informing team participants of the policy
- Implementing the policy
- Role modeling healthy eating behaviours
- Including activities that will educate children about healthy eating as part of the team's programming

Parents will be:

- Informed of the healthy food choices policy
- Asked to provide healthy food choices for snacks or meals
- Asked to provide water for their own child at each game/practice
- Encouraged to practice and demonstrate healthy eating behaviours themselves

Healthy Eating Tips:

- Satisfy thirst with water! Drink more water in hot weather or when very active
- Enjoy vegetables and fruit instead of juice. Consider carrots, oranges, apples or watermelon slices
- Choose grain products that are low fat (less than 3g) and high fibre (more than 2g)
- Compare Nutrition Facts labels to help make wise choices

Review of Policy:

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis



Appendix 3



Choose Healthy Fundraising!

Children are often involved in raising money for their teams. However, fundraising ideas such as selling chocolate bars or cookie dough do not support healthy eating and physical activity. Healthier choices are available.

Try some of these healthy fundraising ideas:

Items You Can Sell:

- Profile your team! Sell promotional items that are branded with your team's logo. For example you can use: travel mugs, water bottles, hats or t-shirts
- Team scarf in the team's colours
- Cookbooks or calendars put together by parents, coaches, and athletes
- Coupon books from local retailers
- Gift baskets, gift certificates, gift wrap, gift boxes and gift bags
- Greeting cards
- Holiday ornaments
- Magazine subscriptions
- Flowers, plants, flower bulbs, trees
- Raffle tickets

Fundraisers that Support Physical Activity:

- Skate night
- Bowling night
- Fun run, fun walk
- Golf tournament
- Skate-a-thon, bike-a-thon,
- Jump rope-a-thon, walk-a-thon
- Sports tournament (basketball, volleyball, tennis, badminton, etc)

Fundraisers that Support the Arts:

- Art show
- Concert, play or musical
- Dance
- Karaoke competition
- Singing telegram
- Talent show



Appendix 3 (cont'd)



Fundraisers that Involve the Community:

- Auction
- Car wash
- Craft show/sale
- Gift wrapping
- Festival/carnival
- Rummage sale
- Treasure/scavenger hunt
- Workshop or class

Healthy Food Fundraisers:

- Assorted low fat cheese baskets
- Fresh fruit by the box
- Fruit and low salt nut baskets
- Lunch box auctions
- Spices
- Gourmet whole wheat pasta packages
- Plain, air popped popcorn (without adding popcorn seasoning)

(The Directorate of Agencies for School Health, 2008, EatRight Ontario 2013)



Appendix 4



Healthy Eating Resources

Durham Region Health Department:

- Public Health Nurses are available to assist with support and resources related to healthy eating. Call Durham Health Connection Line 1-800-841-2729
- Healthy eating resources: For more information on healthy eating please visit durham.ca/healthyeating

Canada's Food Guide: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

Cookspiration: www.cookspiration.com/

Dietitians of Canada: www.dietitians.ca

Health Canada – Food and Nutrition:

www.canada.ca/en/services/health/food-nutrition.html

Unlock Food: www.unlockfood.ca

Canada's food guide **Eat well. Live well.**

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

- Have plenty of vegetables and fruits
- Eat protein foods
- Make water your drink of choice
- Choose whole grain foods

Discover your food guide at Canada.ca/FoodGuide

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Canada



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Notes



DURHAM
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HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/healthyeating

If you require this information in an accessible
format, contact 1-800-841-2729

