

DOC TALK with the Banner Concussion Center

As the calendar turns to May, it is time to start thinking about the summer months and how to best prepare our athletes for the heat by looking at what they eat and drink. This month, we are happy to have our dietician friends from Banner Cardon Children's Medical Center help to provide some nutritional advice.

Good nutrition is important for everyone but especially when exercising. If your child is active in sports, adequate nutrition before, during, and after exercise will promote a positive exercise experience. Well balanced meals including carbohydrates, protein, and fats are recommended. Additionally, adequate fluids may help prevent injury and illness and help your child to do his best physically.

Adequate fluids are important during exercise to prevent dehydration. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends 10-20 oz of water one to two hours prior to exercise followed by 4-6 ounces of water every 15 minutes during intense exercise. After exercise additional fluids are encouraged to replete water lost through sweat: about 3 cups or 24oz of water for each pound of body weight lost via sweat. If your child is complaining of thirst, he may already be dehydrated. Signs of dehydration to watch out for include minimal urine output, dark-colored urine, muscle cramps, headaches, and feeling light-headed. Many people think sports drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade go hand in hand with exercise. However these beverages with extra electrolytes also have added sugars. If your child is exercising for less than 60-90 minutes water should be sufficient. If your child is exercising for extended time periods or in extreme heat conditions where electrolytes will be depleted through sweat, then sports drinks are appropriate in moderation.

In addition to fluids, well balanced meals can help your child succeed physically. On the day of sports or exercise, children should eat well-balanced meals of 50-55% carbohydrate like whole grain bread, pasta, or a baked potato, 25% vegetables such as carrots, tomatoes, or lettuce, and 20% lean protein such as chicken, turkey, lean beef, eggs, nuts, or beans. Try to minimize high fat meals like greasy, fried foods at least three to four hours prior to intense exercise, as fatty foods slow digestion and may inhibit physical performance. Refuel with a carbohydrate snack such as fresh fruit, dried fruit, 100% whole grain granola bars or pretzels 30-60 minutes prior to exercise.

Check out the following websites to get more tips on healthy nutrition for children:

www.choosemyplate.gov

www.eatright.org

If you would like more information about healthy eating, or nutrition counseling- you can schedule an appointment with one of our Registered Dietitians at Cardon Children's Medical Center, by calling our central scheduling office at 480-684-7500. You will need a referral from your primary care doctor or specialist."

For more information about the Banner Concussion Center, to schedule a baseline test or make an appointment with Dr. Erickson please contact us at 602-839-7285. We are located near the campus of Banner Good Samaritan Hospital at 1320 N. 10th St., Suite B Phoenix, AZ 85006. Information about the Banner Concussion Center can also be found on the Banner Health website www.bannerhealth.com

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