



HALF TIME SNACKS FOR ACTIVE KIDS

Lots of Australian kids play weekend sport at a community level.

Just as important as everyday food and drinks, are what children consume when they play or train for sport. These foods and drinks should follow healthy eating principles, provide fuel for activity and important nutrients for growth and development.

Do kids need half time snacks?

Did you know that a half time snack is not essential for physical activity that lasts less than 75-minutes — but drinking water and staying hydrated is vital!



Water

The best thing you can do to ensure children are healthy and performing well during sports is to have ample water available to ensure they remain hydrated. This is important for their general health, good for performance, as well as protecting their teeth.

Dehydration is a major concern for dentists in children who consume sugary half-time snacks. When dehydrated, saliva production in the mouth decreases. Saliva helps to protect the teeth from tooth decay and erosion. When saliva production is reduced, so too is the protection of teeth. That's why dentists recommend children drink plain tap water when physically active to keep hydrated. Tap water is recommended because in most Australian communities it contains added fluoride which helps to protect and strengthen the teeth.

Fruit

If you want to provide half-time snacks, choose healthy food that kids would have day to day. Fruit is a great option as many fruits contain large amounts of water, which is hydrating. Fruit also has many nutritional qualities including carbohydrates for energy, and important vitamins and minerals that contribute to good health and performance.

Approximately 1/3 of Australian children don't consume enough fruit in their diet. Choosing fruit as a half time snack is a great way to increase children's fruit intake. The most practical options which can be prepared ahead of game time include sliced oranges, slices of watermelon, apples, bananas, or grapes.





Are oranges bad for teeth?

Some people believe that eating oranges at half time can be damaging to tooth enamel.

Eating a few slices of orange at half time is not enough to cause damage to the teeth. Just remember to stay hydrated as well!

What about lollies?

Lollies may seem like a quick energy boost but compared to fruit, lollies have no nutritional value and include large amounts of sugar.

Lollies are often sticky, which can cause them to adhere to the tooth's surface and remain there for long periods of time. This increases the tooth's exposure to sugar and increases risk of tooth decay.

Eating lollies is NOT recommended for junior players.



What about sports drinks?

Most sports drinks contain large amounts of added sugar. They are not necessary for children participating in recreational sport. To ensure children perform at their best in junior sport, water is the best choice. The Australian Dietary Guidelines state to limit the intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as lollies, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks; these food and drinks are not an essential or necessary part of a healthy diet.



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