



# Mecklenburg County Medical Society

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## RE: **HEALTHY SNACKS**

Dear Athletic Association Directors, Coaches and Parents,

Thank you for always being eager to improve the health of our student athletes.

The primary concern for young recreational athletes is to prevent dehydration during vigorous play. **PLAIN WATER** is the drink of choice for all athletes and should not only be given **PRIOR** to exercise, but be readily available during participation. Sugar-sweetened sports beverages have **NO** role in athletics and may provide calories that overshoot those expended during exercise.

Consider eliminating a snack during or after play for the following reasons:

- Electrolytes lost during exercise will be replenished at the next meal or with any snack
- Snacks, including juices or sports drinks, frequently balance out or exceed the calories an athlete has just “burned”

If you do plan to offer a group snack, consider selecting a **HEALTHY** snack from the suggestions below:

- DRINK:** WATER is best
- CHOOSE:** Fresh fruits - oranges, grapes, watermelon slices, apples, bananas  
Vegetables - carrots, celery, bok choy, cherry tomatoes  
Raisins, dried apricots  
Low-fat dairy, such as string cheese  
Plain popcorn  
Baked chips or whole-grain crackers (limit portions)  
Low-fat granola bars
- AVOID:** 100% fruit juices (empty sugar calories)  
Sugar-sweetened sports drinks  
Sugar-containing soft drinks  
High-fat chips, cookies, cupcakes, doughnuts, candy  
Energy Bars (which are often full of sugar, caffeine, and/or fat)

If your team offers a snack, please plan these so they also enhance our athletes' health!

Working with the community to improve the health of our youth,

Child Health Committee  
Mecklenburg County Medical Society  
[www.meckmed.org](http://www.meckmed.org)