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# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2010

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: EATING RIGHT FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**T**hink about a car. A car needs gasoline to help it run. If there is no gasoline, the car will not go anywhere! Children need fuel as well. They need food to help keep their energy levels up throughout the day. The more nutritious food they eat, the more energy they will have for their daily activities and for participating in physical activity as well.

Walking around, concentrating in school, playing outside – children need energy to do all of these things! Your child needs nutritious food to get the energy he or she needs.

**Carbohydrates**

The main source of energy for physical activity is carbohydrates. Some common carbohydrates are breads, pastas, and rice, as well as fruits and vegetables. The best choices for children are those that come from whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Whole grains can be found in whole wheat breads, whole wheat cereals, and whole wheat pastas. All fruits and vegetables contain valuable sources of carbohydrates and are good sources of energy.

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# Protein

Another nutrient important for physical activity is protein. Protein helps your child's body build muscle. Growing children need protein. Protein can be found in meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, and beans.

## Fat

Too much fat from foods such as cookies, cakes, pies, and some fast foods can be unhealthy, but everyone needs some fat! Good fats can be found in fish, nuts, and seeds.

## Not all foods are the same!

If all your child eats are foods high in sugar such as soda, candy bars, and ice cream, or foods high in bad fat such as fries and potato chips, he or she may not be able to participate in all the activities he or she would like.

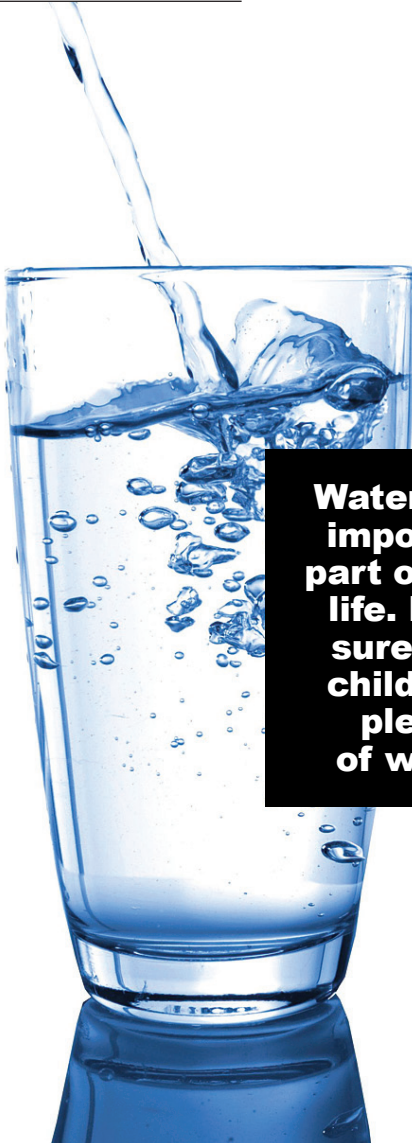
## When should they fuel up?

A healthy breakfast is important to get your child going in the morning and to help with concentration in school throughout the day. Eating breakfast every day is important.

Eating healthy snacks will give your child energy in the afternoon. This is especially important if he or she is involved in afterschool activities. However, eating too close to the start of the physical activity could cause feelings of sickness. Make sure your child waits at least 30 minutes between a snack and the start of physical activity.

## Do not forget water!

Water is an important part of daily life. You want to make sure your child is drinking plenty of water. Encourage your child to drink one glass of water with each meal, and one glass before, during, and after any physical activity.



**Water is an important part of daily life. Make sure your child gets plenty of water.**

## SOURCES:

Position of the American Dietetic Association, Dietitians of Canada, and the American College of Sports Medicine: Nutrition and athletic performance. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2000; 100:1543-1556.

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**Written by:** Nicole Peritore

**Edited by:** Connee Wheeler

**Designed by:** Rusty Manseau

Stock images: 123RF.com

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