



3 PLAYS FOR A HEALTHY TEAM



There are 3 simple things you can do during practices and games to keep youth athletes healthy and performing their best!

1 Boost active time by 10-15 minutes.

- Keep all players moving by using small group activities or by playing small-sided games.
- Try adapting well-known children's games to your sport (e.g. Red Light, Green Light).
- Teach players light-intensity movements that they can do while waiting to enter an activity.

Why it's important

Practice may last an hour, but studies show that children are typically moving for less than half the time.*

Keeping players moving for an additional 10-15 minutes improves fitness and keeps players engaged.

2 Make water the easy choice.

- Remind players to bring 1-2 full water bottles to practices and games.
- At the beginning of the season, let parents and players know that doctors recommend water, not sports drinks or other sugary drinks.
- Consider a "water only" policy for your team.

Why it's important

Players who drink water and eat a healthy diet will perform their best.

Sticking to water also helps players avoid the added sugar in beverages like sports drinks, which contain almost 9 teaspoons of sugar in a 20 oz bottle!

3 Make snacks fruits or vegetables.

- If your team has a snack, ask parents to rotate bringing fruits or vegetables like sliced oranges, apples, or carrot sticks.
- For tournaments, encourage players to pack a healthy lunch.
- If players eat a healthy meal before practice, they probably don't even need a snack!

Why it's important

Unhealthy treats can add up since children often have them outside of sports, too. Desserts, soda, and pizza are the top three sources of calories in a typical child's diet.

Have fruits or vegetables for snacks and save the treats for special occasions.

*Leek et al. (2010), Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine; Wickel & Eisenmann (2007), Journal of the American College of Sports Medicine.