

“I’m too busy!” Meal Tips for the On-the-Go Athlete

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A common phrase I hear is: “I have no time to eat breakfast, meal plan, or pack snacks for the day. It is just impossible!” Between school, practice, homework, and extracurricular activities finding time for healthy yet quick options for meals and snacks can be quite the challenge! Your child’s nutrition directly affects their performance both on and off the field. Good nutrition practices and a healthy diet are one of the greatest keys to success for your young athlete. I explain to my patients you would never expect your car to run without gas. Food is your fuel to help optimize your sports nutrition goals- whether you are a football player or cross country runner. Not only is it important to fuel your sport, but proper nutrition also aids in the prevention of illness and injury.

Snacks are an important part of an athlete’s day that is often missing. Many young athletes do not have a snack before they head out to practice after school. Although lunch times vary, you should try to squeeze in at least one snack throughout your school day. An athlete should aim to have a snack 30 minutes to an hour before practice if possible. If you have practice in the evening hours, packing a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, banana, carrots with dip, and a granola bar will better serve your young athlete on the field versus a burger and fries. The fat content in the fast food items could leave your athlete feeling sluggish and with a stomach ache! The packed dinner provided could be thrown together in 5 minutes or less. Time it and make it a family game! Use the following meal, planning, and snack ideas/tips below as a guide. Wishing everyone a happy fueled Fall Sports season!

Meal Ideas for Busy On-The-Go Athlete

o Tips:

- Plan ahead for the week. Take 10 minutes on the weekend to plan out a family calendar of meals.
- If you have to hit up the drive thru- make smart choices like grilled chicken sandwiches/wraps, apple slices, or yogurt parfaits.
- Pack meals to take with you. Have all items deconstructed in the refrigerator ready to go for quick preparation!
- Buy food items in bulk to have on hand during busy seasons
- Keep food in your locker or backpack

- Pack 2-3 meals ahead of time. Put in lunch boxes or brown bags for quick grab and go access.
- Get the kids involved! Studies have shown greater compliance with healthy eating if your child has a hand in meal preparation.

Healthy breakfast ideas:

- o Smoothies- put all ingredients in blender the night before. Stick in the fridge overnight.
- o English muffin with peanut butter and banana slices
- o Non-traditional breakfast is okay too!
 - Turkey/cheese sandwich
 - Cheese stick and crackers
 - Leftovers from the night before
- o Yogurt, granola, fruit parfait
- o Granola bar with piece of fruit
- o Hardboiled eggs and toast
- o Bowl of whole grain cereal with milk

Healthy meal ideas:

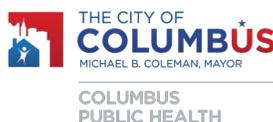
- o Chicken breast/fish/lean beef, with pasta/rice/quinoa, veggie side dish, whole grain roll, frozen yogurt for dessert
- o Pasta with lean meat sauce, garden salad, whole grain roll and butter
- o Burrito or rice bowl with rice, chicken/pork/beef, beans, vegetables, salsa, light sour cream and cheese. Add tortilla chips and guacamole
- o Sandwich on whole grain bread, turkey/chicken/roast beef, veggies, cheese, and condiment of choice. Add pretzels or baked chips
- o Veggie and chicken quesadilla, stir fry, tacos, or kabobs

Healthy snack ideas:

- o Granola bars
- o Crackers with peanut butter
- o Fruit (banana, apple, applesauce in a pouch) and nuts
- o Baggie of trail mix
- o Pretzels with cheese cubes
- o Cheese stick with a piece of fruit
- o Popcorn
- o Half of turkey sandwich
- o Bowl of whole grain cereal

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