

There's a common misconception that food high in protein is essential for kids who play sports. This is completely wrong. Young athletes need food that is high in carbohydrates and specifically carbohydrates with a low Glycaemic Index ranking (see [www.glycemicindex.com](http://www.glycemicindex.com)). These are the carbohydrates that release energy slowly.

Our body needs Glycogen as a key energy source. With an appropriate eating regime you will help your child avoid hunger during practise or a game, stabilise blood sugar and add some food energy to complement existing energy.

You will also prevent stomach upset and properly hydrate your child's body.

Recommended eating regime:

Your child should have a good meal no closer than 2.5 – 3 hours before a game. For Midget/Junior players with very early kick off times, it is important to have a light snack as early as possible before kick off times, but not within one hour.

## **Pre Game Meal Examples**

### **Meal 1**

Cereal (avoid highly sweetened cereals)  
Banana slices  
Milk (low-fat or skim)  
Toast/jam  
Pineapple juice  
Still Water

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### **Meal 2**

Chicken noodle soup  
Crackers  
Orange  
Low-fat yogurt  
Still Water

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### **Meal 3**

Poached Egg  
Toast/jam  
Milk (low-fat or skim)  
Orange juice  
Still Water

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#### **Meal 4**

Pancakes (limit butter and syrup)  
Applesauce  
Milk (low-fat or skim)  
Grape juice  
Still Water

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#### **Meal 5**

Turkey sandwich/bread and lettuce  
Apple  
Milk (low-fat or skim)  
Tomato juice  
Still Water

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#### **Meal 6**

Cottage cheese/peach  
Breadsticks  
Milk (low-fat or skim)  
Apple juice  
Still Water

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#### **Meal 7**

Spaghetti/tomato sauce  
Bread  
Milk (low-fat or skim)  
Orange juice  
Still Water

Give them cool water to drink before the game to prevent dehydration. Don't let them wait until they feel thirsty. That means that they are already dehydrated. They should drink regularly at intervals in training and games. They can drink energy drinks with electrolytes especially sodium because the body loses sodium when we sweat.

Don't give to them sweets or chocolate during the game. They will have less energy and they will feel more fatigued after the game.

## **After Game Meal Examples**

It is important children have a decent meal following prolonged exercise and that they drink ample quantities of water within the first hour following exercise to aid re-hydration.

### **Main Meal #1**

Chicken and noodles/gravy  
Whole wheat bread  
Sweet potato  
Fresh or cooked broccoli  
Low Fat milk  
Orange juice

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### **Main Meal #2**

Hamburger/bun  
Baked beans  
Pear halves/lettuce  
Cantaloupe  
Low Fat milk  
Grape juice

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### **Main Meal #3**

Baked or broiled pork chop  
Baked sweet potato  
Lettuce and tomato salad/dressing  
Banana  
Whole wheat bread/jelly  
Low Fat milk  
Pineapple juice

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### **Main Meal #4**

Spaghetti and meatballs/Parmesan cheese  
Italian bread/margarine  
Carrot sticks  
Peach halves/lettuce  
Low Fat milk  
Apple juice

## Main Meal #5

Macaroni and cheese  
Cooked green beans  
Fruit salad  
Whole wheat bread/jelly/peanut butter  
Low Fat milk\*  
Orange juice

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## Main Meal #6

Roast beef/stewed tomatoes  
Baked potato/margarine  
Whole wheat bread/jelly  
Fresh fruit of choice  
Low Fat milk\*  
Cranberry juice

Children should eat every day starchy food like:

<b>Pasta</b> Macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, ravioli (plain or with sauce)	Meats, cheese, and oil add fat to the sauce. Use them sparingly.
<b>Rice</b>	Use a sauce low in fat and only as spicy as you can tolerate easily. Or try rice with a little soy sauce flavoring.
<b>Potatoes</b> Baked, boiled, mashed, but not French fries	Limit butter, gravy, or sour cream.
<b>Starchy vegetables</b> Peas, carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes	Cooked vegetables are more easily digested.
<b>Breads</b> Rolls, muffins, crackers, quick breads, bagels	Use nutritious, low-fat bread products and spreads.
<b>Cereals</b> Oatmeal, other hot cereals, cold cereals	Avoid cereals with high sugar content.
<b>Soups</b> Noodle, rice, vegetable, clear broth, bouillon	Choose low-fat soups. Eating large portions of chili, split pea, or bean soups may lead to digestive problems for some athletes.
<b>Pancakes</b>	Limit butter and syrup.
<b>Fruits, fruit juices</b>	Use any juice or cooked fruit except prune. Oranges, bananas, and peeled apples are easily digested raw fruits. You may wish to dilute juices, especially in hot weather. Try hot cider or juice during cold weather.
<b>Milk products</b> Low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat cheeses, puddings, "shakes" made with low-fat milk or yogurt and fruit and/or juice	Avoid high-fat milk products before games.

<b>Liquid meals in a can</b>	Though not a substitute for solid foods in the daily diet, liquid meals are convenient for occasional pre-game use. You can make liquid meals at home using the following recipe, which makes about one quart: 1/2 cup of water 1/2 cup of nonfat dry milk 1/4 cup of sugar 3 cups of skim milk Flavor with a teaspoon of vanilla or cherry extract
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### **Food that should be avoided:**

<b>Candy, sugar, honey</b>	After an initial rise, your blood-sugar level can actually drop below normal, resulting in a sudden feeling of tiredness or fatigue.
<b>Tea, chocolate, cola</b>	Caffeine consumption leads to dehydration.
<b>Fried foods, high-fat meats, fats, oils, gravies, sour cream, etc.</b>	Fat digests slowly and therefore stays in the stomach longer.
<b>Some raw fruits, vegetables, popcorn, nuts, dry beans and peas</b>	Some of these foods may cause gas and/or an uncomfortable feeling of fullness during the game. An athlete needs to avoid the foods that give these problems.
<b>Any new food</b>	Don't experiment with new foods right before an event. If you experience any adverse reactions, your body has little time to recover.
<b>Fruit-flavored drinks</b>	Many drinks contain little fruit juice and a great deal of sugar. Read the label.

### **No Spare Time food:**

- Oranges, bananas, pears, peaches, plums
- Juices
- Mozzarella string cheese
- Yogurt (low-fat)
- Single-portion cans of fruit
- Breadsticks/snack sticks
- Bread with jelly
- Cottage cheese (low-fat)
- Milk (low-fat or skim)

### **After School Practice:**

Children should have a healthy snack.

Example:

Fresh fruit, dried fruit, muesli bars, sandwiches with brown bread, milk shakes, nuts, fruit smoothies, fruit yoghurt, whole meal muffins,

**After Practise: Healthy meal as shown above and plenty of water.**

**You can also give them:**

Multi minerals and vitamins, vitamin B complex for muscles, omega 3 for brain, joints and skin, Calcium and Magnesium for bones and vitamin C (every 4 hours) if you suspect that they are about to catch a cold.