



MODEL
HEALTHY
BEHAVIOR

PRACTICE
POSITIVE
MESSAGING AND
COMMUNICATION



OFFER HEALTHY
SNACKS AT
COMPETITIONS
AND PRACTICES



CHOOSE
HEALTHY
OPTIONS ON
THE ROAD



Athletes often learn eating behaviors from watching us. By demonstrating healthy choices at competitions and practices, Special Olympics Washington coaches can role model healthy behaviors around nutrition and hydration.



- Choose water (avoid soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, sugary coffee beverages)
- Avoid having fast food bags and cups visible at practice, events and competitions
- Prioritize whole fruits and vegetables when you are at practice, events and competitions
- Practice and encourage healthy portion sizes



Use positive messaging to encourage healthier choices. Try to avoid language that is coercive, shaming or conditional. Most people are more motivated by positive messages than negative ones.

Set Expectations

Events can feel like special occasions, and sometimes athletes might want to celebrate by having foods that are less healthy. Help set expectations by talking to athletes about how events are for promoting health, and that athletes can celebrate by playing with others and having fun.



Use Positive Reinforcement

Example of things to say:

- "Look how Susie choose apple slices as a side instead of French fries with her sandwich. She must know that fruits and vegetables are full of good nutrition that can help us perform better as athletes."
- "What are some of the healthy things we can order at today's lunch stop?"

Example of things not to say:

- "You shouldn't eat so many cookies. They're going to make you gain weight."
- "I wish you hadn't ordered a super-sized soda with lunch. I'm disappointed that you don't care more about eating healthy."
- "Whoever skips dessert gets to ride at the front of the bus today."

Recruit Athlete Leaders

You don't have to promote healthy choices alone. Athletes can be excellent health ambassadors and champions for healthy eating!

Athlete leaders can:

- Coordinate healthy snacks
- Pick healthy stops on the road
- Brainstorm menu items to order
- Remind team to take water breaks





Snacking is a great way to help athletes meet their nutrition needs and maintain energy during practice and sports events.

Make healthy snacks available throughout the day

- People can often make unhealthy choices when they are hungry and no healthy options are available.
- Try to make healthy food choices available throughout the day to keep athletes from getting hungry and seeking out less healthy foods.

Plan ahead

- Sometimes, it's hard to find healthy choices on the go.
- Plan ahead for what snacks to have at events or on the bus, and where you'll stop for food when traveling. That way you know healthy choices will be available.

Have water stations

- Sometimes when we feel hungry, we're really just thirsty.
- Try to have water available at all times. If possible, use water filling stations instead of plastic water bottles to cut down on waste.

Choose beverages and snacks that meet Healthy Beverage & Healthy Snack Standards

- The Healthy Beverage & Healthy Snack Standards are part of the Healthy Food & Beverage Guidelines.
- When choosing snacks, it's good to offer a few items from different food groups.

Examples of healthy snacks that almost always meet the guidelines include:

- Hummus and veggie sticks ●●●
- Fresh fruit and nuts ●●●
- Apple slices and reduced-fat cheese (like part-skim mozzarella sticks) ●●
- Trail mix with dried fruit and nuts (no added sugars, chocolate or candy) ●●●
- Whole grain crackers and reduced-fat cheddar slices ●
- Veggie sticks and guacamole ●●●
- Hard-boiled eggs ●●●
- Smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fresh or frozen fruit ●●
- Lean turkey slices and whole wheat crackers ●
- Veggie sticks and nut butter (like peanut or almond) ●●●

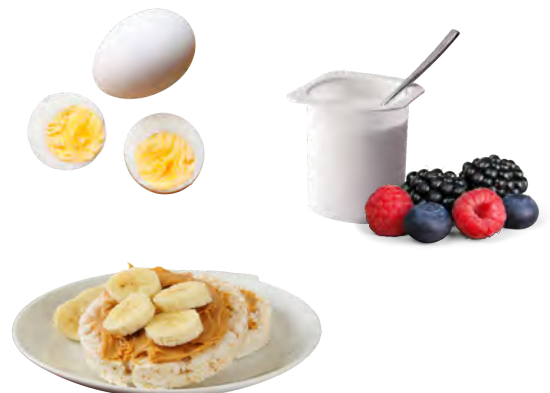


For snack and beverage suggestions:

<https://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=17867964011>

To see if a snack meets healthy snack standards:

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>













Many athletes and teams travel to sports events in their regions and statewide. It is important to maintain good nutrition and hydration while traveling to an event, before, during and after the competition. Coaches should plan with the team to determine what foods and beverages to pack and where to eat while traveling and competing together.

- Confirm any food allergies or special diet needs with the athlete, family or caregiver
- Pack healthy snacks for the road instead of stopping at a drive through (see resources and references for snack ideas)
- Review restaurant menus with your team and discuss healthy choices before dining out
- Choose baked, grilled or broiled foods instead of fried
- Side recommendations: choose fresh fruit or side salad instead of fries or a cookie
- Ask for toppings and dressings on the side
- Always encourage water or unflavored low fat milk instead of sugary drinks

Guidance for Ordering at Fast Food Restaurants

Sandwich Shops	Burger Joints	Mexican Food
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to keep your meal to 500 calories or less • Choose whole grain bread • Add extra veggies on your sandwiches • Choose mustard/vinegar instead of mayo • Choose a half portion of meat • Make it a salad instead – dressing on the side • Choose healthy sides like applesauce instead of cookies • Order a 6 inch instead of a foot long 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to keep your meal to 500 calories or less • Avoid supersized and value-sized items • Order burgers with a single patty without cheese • Choose a wrap instead of a burger • Skip the bacon • Choose healthy sides like apples instead of fries • Ask for condiments on the side • Choose a 4 or 6-piece chicken nugget instead of an 8-piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to keep your meal to 500 calories or less • Choose veggies and beans instead of meat • Choose two individual tacos instead of a platter • Watch out for sneaky sodium – meats, sides (beans, rice and fried potatoes) can contain a lot of added sodium • Avoid fried and breaded items • Ask for condiments on the side
<p>SUBWAY</p>  <p>6" Veggie Delite Sandwich</p>  <p>Oven Roasted Chicken Salad with dressing on the side</p>	<p>MCDONALDS</p>  <p>Plain Hamburger with Apple Slices</p>  <p>4 or 6-piece Chicken Nugget with Apple Slices</p>	<p>TACO TIME</p>  <p>Veggie Chop Salad with dressing on the side</p>  <p>2x Crisp Chicken Tacos with Rice</p>
<p>Healthy Beverage Choices</p>   <p>Water or low-fat plain milk instead of sugary beverages</p>		