

SECTION 10

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY
LIFESTYLES



10



CANADA
BASKETBALL



10.0 ENCOURAGING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

How an athlete takes care of his/her body directly affects their performance on the court. You have a powerful influence over how an athlete conducts themselves: by providing them with information on how they can lead a healthy lifestyle, and help them to not only develop as an athlete, but adopt habits that they can carry with them as they mature.

10.1 - NUTRITION

As a coach, it is important that you talk to your players and their parents, about what they can do to ensure that they are maintaining a healthy, well-balanced diet. What an athlete puts into his/her body and when they do directly affects their performance in a practice or game. Adopting healthy eating habits early, and providing them with the correct guidance to do so, will go a long way in their quest to keep fit and have fun.

What to Eat and When:

- An athlete's performance is directly affected by what they put into their body; a diet high in complex carbohydrates, and low in fat protein is the best way for them to stay energized and healthy.
- Carbohydrates are stored as glycogen in muscles and the liver – glycogen is the quick energy needed in order for muscle activity. What are your best choices? Fruits, bread, rice, pasta, milk and yogurt. Try to stay away from high carbohydrate foods which are less nutritious such as sugar, candy and soda.
- It's important that an athlete has a sufficient meal before practice or game time in order for them to ensure adequate energy levels. Meals should be eaten at least 3 hours prior to physical activity to ensure proper digestion.
- What to serve? Try:
 - > Soup and a sandwich (lean meat), with milk
 - > Small serving of pasta with plain tomato sauce
 - > Cereal, milk, fruit and toast.
- If time is a constraint, eat smaller amounts of similar foods
- By helping them eat healthy now, you can help them eat healthy for life!

10.2 - HYDRATION

It's very important that your athletes stay hydrated during the duration of their practice and/or game. Fluid is needed in order to regulate body temperature. Make sure that parents send them along with a full water bottle, and that you provide them with plenty of water breaks. Although sports drinks can be a beneficial alternative to water, as they contain carbohydrate that helps to maintain blood glucose levels, they are not always necessary for young athletes. Water is a young athlete's greatest tool to staying hydrated before, during and after exercise. Remember: the body's thirst mechanism has a delayed response so don't depend on it to cue the need for a drink. Drink early, and drink often!

10.3 – SLEEPING PATTERNS

Young athletes who are sleep deprived commonly suffer from decreased performance, and are more prone to injury. Hours of sleep required differs at various ages - 5-6 years old: 10-12 hours/day; 7-12 years old: 10-11 hours/day; and 13 years old: 8-9 hours/day. They are more likely to get the right amount of sleep each night if a routine is established. Communicate this with their parents – encourage them to establish a routine that allows their child to go to bed at the same time each night and get the right amount of rest. Coupled with healthy eating habits, good sleeping patterns will go a long way in establishing a healthy lifestyle that will allow young athletes to prosper on and off the court.



10.4 – LIFE BALANCE

It can be quite easy for children to get so involved in extracurricular sports that they forget about their other responsibilities. Parents are ultimately accountable for ensuring that they maintain balance in their child's life between sports, school and family. As a coach, however, you have an important role to communicate its importance; without balance, one aspect will ultimately suffer.

Tips on Finding Balance:

- Balance sports and time with family - Encourage all members of the family to make it out to practices and games. This not only is a great family activity, but it shows young athletes that the whole family supports him/ her. Encourage parents to allot time each week to spend with the family that does not revolve around the basketball court – have a Family Game Night, cook a healthy meal together, or plan a weekend getaway.
- Ensure academics come first - Encourage your athletes to complete his/ her homework before practices and games. Take an interest in their academics and ask how school is going and what they are learning. Talk to parents about the importance of good grades - if you believe that the time devoted to sport is negatively affecting their academics, talk to them so they understand that the time spent on the court is a way for them to have fun after their school work is done.
- Maximize travel time - Travelling to and from practices is an ideal time for parents to communicate with their children. Talk to the parents and encourage them to take advantage of this time to not only talk about practices/games, but their academic and social life.