



Dear Athletic Association Directors, Coaches and Parents,

Thank you for always being eager to improve the health of our student athletes.

The primary concern for young recreational athletes is to prevent dehydration during vigorous play. PLAIN WATER is the drink of choice for all athletes and should not only be given PRIOR to exercise, but be readily available during participation. Sugar-sweetened sports beverages have NO role in athletics and may provide calories that overshoot those expended during exercise.

Consider eliminating a snack during or after play for the following reasons:

- ◆ Electrolytes lost during exercise will be replenished at the next meal or with any snack
- ◆ Snacks, including juices or sports drinks, frequently balance out or exceed the calories an athlete has just “burned”

If you do plan to offer a group snack, consider selecting a HEALTHY snack from the suggestions below:

DRINK: WATER is best

CHOOSE:

- ◆ Fresh fruits - oranges, grapes, watermelon slices, apples, bananas
- ◆ Vegetables - carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes
- ◆ Raisins, dried apricots
- ◆ Low-fat dairy, such as string cheese
- ◆ Plain popcorn
- ◆ Baked chips or whole-grain crackers (limit portions)
- ◆ Low-fat granola bars

AVOID:

- ◆ 100% fruit juices (empty sugar calories)
- ◆ Sugar-sweetened sports drinks
- ◆ Sugar-containing soft drinks
- ◆ High-fat chips, cookies, cupcakes, doughnuts, candy
- ◆ Energy Bars (which are often full of sugar, caffeine, and/or fat)

If your team offers a snack, please plan these so they also enhance our athletes' health!

Working with the community to improve the health of our youth,

Mecklenburg County Medical Society & I Heart Water

For more information visit www.iHeartWaterNC.com or www.MeckMed.org

