



Ask the Registered Dietitian

Sport Nutrition for Children –

Energetic Eating!

The amount of food that your active children will need to eat each day depends on:

- **Age** – Growing children and teenagers need more food than younger children.
- **Body size** – Bigger and taller children will need more servings of each of the four food groups than smaller children, even if they are of the same age.
- **Activity level** – Children involved in endurance sports (e.g. cross country skiing, running, cycling) power sports and start/stop sports (e.g. team sports, tennis, squash), have greater energy needs than children involved in aesthetic sports (e.g. gymnastics, synchronized swimming, ballet).
- **Growth rate** – Children and teenagers experiencing growth spurts will need to snack more frequently and eat larger portions of foods.

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating provides the framework for determining the total number of servings of each of the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide your active child needs each day. Get a copy of Canada's Food Guide (http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onppbnpn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html) and use it to track your child's portion sizes to see how many servings they get in a day. Here are some examples of different active kids and their "Energetic Eating" habits!

MARIE: 4'6" 60 lbs

Marie is an 11 yr old who likes to play with others in a team type setting. She plays soccer once a week in a community league and has a basketball scrimmage on Saturday mornings. On the other days of the week Marie is lightly active. To meet her energy needs, Marie needs slightly more than the bare minimum number of servings from each food group. She chooses water most often as her fluid of choice and often snacks on veggies and fruits. As she grows and becomes more active, she may choose more servings from each food group.

FOOD GROUPS

Grains & Cereals 7 servings
Vegetables & Fruits 6 servings
Milk Products 3-4 servings
Meat & Alternatives Proteins 2 servings
8 -10 cups of fluids, water for training sessions

ROBIN: 5'5" 135 lbs

Robin is a 17 yr old cross-country (XC) skier. In her off-season she does cross country running and road cycling with some general strength training for core muscle groups. Robin has finished growing in height but is still filling out and gaining muscle mass. Although Robin's energy needs are high once she gains more muscle mass and strength and moves up to longer racing distances she will require more energy (and food) to meet her training needs.

FOOD GROUPS

Grains & Cereals 10 servings
Vegetables & Fruits 8 servings
Milk Products 3-4 servings
Meat & Alternatives Proteins 2-3 servings
16 + cups of fluids, during training sessions

DAVID: 5'5" 120 lbs

David is a 13 yr old tennis player. He trains most weekdays & on Sundays he does a sport specific strength-training program. David is currently in a growth spurt – he has grown 6" in the last 6 months. This growth combined with his intensive training – aerobic conditioning, muscular strength training and on court tennis drilling – requires a high-end energy intake – as high as that of an endurance athlete.

FOOD GROUPS

Grains & Cereals 12+ servings
Vegetables & Fruits 10+ servings
Milk Products 4-6 servings
Meat & Alternatives Proteins 3 servings
16 + cups of fluids; and foods during training sessions

Would my child benefit from taking a multivitamin/mineral supplement?

The required daily intake of calories, vitamins and minerals, is based on an individual's age, gender, general health and activity level. Those who lead extremely active lives may need higher amounts of specific vitamins and minerals, including iron (for menstruating female athletes) and B-complex vitamins to maintain required energy levels to perform daily tasks well. A daily multivitamin can help to ensure that these requirements are being met.



Canadian Association
for the Advancement
of Women and Sport
and Physical Activity