

It's a question as old as youth soccer itself... What are good soccer snack choices for our young players? All parents want to be sure our children are appropriately nourished, and NOT load them up with sugary drinks and candy. Here is your official Baton Rouge Soccer guide to the fundamentals of nutrition for kids, as well as some great, healthy snack ideas.



Principles of eating well

Eating well is central to good health and well-being for everyone, especially children. For our young players, eating and drinking well in childhood is essential for proper growth and development, but also for developing a love of good food and the development of social skills. Acquiring healthy eating and drinking patterns at a young age can set your child up for healthy habits later in life. The focus for eating well as children should always be on the range of interesting and tasty foods that can make up a healthy diet, rather than focusing on denying them certain foods and drinks. This way, children grow up to have a positive perception of eating healthy!

Children as athletes

Children need the energy found in calories to maintain their body functions and to stay active, just as adults do. However, they also need extra energy for growth – giving them relatively high energy needs for their size. Throughout Baton Rouge Soccer Club, we want to support our young athletes on all levels so they can grow to reach their potential (both physically and technically). Our top elite teams track their diets in order to improve their performance on the field, but all of our players can benefit from healthy snack choices. We can start the conversation about positive food choices with our youngest players by helping them select soccer snacks that aid in their development.

Guidelines

Snack time is an important element of youth soccer. Snacks can be used to motivate our young players and help bring out the best on the field. In addition, snacks can bring players together and reinforce community within our teams. However, our snack choices should focus on hydrating and fueling our players. This means avoiding snacks with artificial coloring and added sugars (such as Gatorade or Gushers) in exchange for water and fresh fruit. Players also have different needs depending on when they eat in reference to the game. The chart below outlines some of these needs.

Time of Day	Intention of the Snack	Examples
Before a game (~30 minutes)	Give the player energy for the game and get hydrated	Protein filled snacks such as a hard boiled egg or beef jerky with water
Half Time	Focus on hydration and listening to coach	Watermelon or other fresh fruits and water
After the game	Reward the players for working hard	String cheese and crackers or popcorn with mini M&Ms and 100% fruit juice boxes

Snack Suggestions

Our favorite soccer snacks are fresh fruits and vegetables! However, not everyone has time to cut up fresh fruit before kickoff. Here are other great suggestions of snacks that Baton Rouge Soccer Club recommends.

- Fresh fruit (oranges, pears, apples, bananas, seedless grapes, watermelon, cantaloupe, mango, pineapple, kiwi, plums, or berries such as strawberries and raspberries)
- Raw vegetables (carrots, peppers, or snap peas)
- Granola bars and bites (Clif, Nature's Path)
- Crackers (Late July)
- Fruit bars (Pressed by Kind)
- Beef jerky
- String cheese
- 100% fruit juice boxes
- Popcorn
- Plain yogurt