



We received the "SPLASH" magazine in the mail this month. Flipping through I found a pull out advertisement presented by CHOBANI titled "Is This Your Meet Concession". It's just a few pages discussing snack options at swim meets and, of course, explaining how CHOBANI is a great snack choice.

I agree healthy snacks should be available at swim meets, kids should choose healthy snacks to "grow strong"; however, I found the article a little misleading. The suggested snacks in the advertisement are great ideas, but the advertisement missed the accuracy of the nutrition lesson. Therefore, this month, let's take a moment for SNACK TIME!

### Snacking

What is a snack? A snack is a small amount of food eaten between meals. Snacks have a valuable role in a healthy lifestyle. Snacks can:

- Curb your hunger until your next meal to avoid overeating.
- Increase your nutrient intake: we can't fit it all in at meal time. Snack time offers an opportunity to increase your fruit, vegetable and dairy intake.
- Sustain energy levels – especially with our school age kids. Lunch may be at

11:00am but dinner isn't until after practice, perhaps 7:00pm. Afterschool snacks can fill the void.

- Recovery from Exercise – consuming carbohydrates and protein within 15-30min post exercise can replace your energy stores. Additionally, again, curb your appetite. A swimmer too hungry for dinner can over eat.

Despite the many benefits, snacking can sabotage a healthy lifestyle. Summer time is approaching fast. Kids out of their usual routines, boredom and higher energy levels may result in unhealthy snacking. Country Club concessions, snack machines at camp, vacation dining, and time for more social eating doesn't always offer the healthy snack choices optimal for a healthy lifestyle and child athlete.



### Be Prepared

Healthy snacking requires forethought and planning. Keeping healthy snacks available and prepared will encourage your child to choose the healthy snack. Just as with healthy meals, you need to plan ahead to snack right.

The options are endless for healthy snacks. Here are some basic guidelines to assure healthy snacking:

1. First ask yourself, "Am I hungry." Water should be part of your everyday healthy lifestyle; however, a good trigger to drink is when you first reach for a snack. Perhaps you are just thirsty. Although, you may also just be bored, and need to find something to do.
2. Ask yourself, "Is there any benefit to this snack?" Will it help to achieve your goal of 3 servings of dairy a day; goal of 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables a day; goal of 25g of fiber a day; improve your intake of antioxidants, vitamins/minerals, etc... If the food is providing only a sugar fix, or a salty/fatty urge... look for something else.
3. Is it really a snack? Meaning, is the portion size small enough to be a snack or is it too much food? A snack is generally around 100 calories (a piece of fruit, cheese stick, small yogurt). Perhaps one snack time (like after school when there is a big break between meals) will be around 200-300 calories (peanut butter crackers, hummus and carrots, oatmeal, handful of nuts)



## Snacking Nutritional Breakdown

The CHOBANI article criticizes “simple carbohydrates” claiming they are not a sustainable source of energy. However, yogurt itself is a “simple carbohydrate” (lactose is in milk and yogurt). A simple carbohydrate consists of only one or two sugars (as in the molecular construction not grams of sugar, i.e. glucose, fructose, sucrose, lactose). Simple carbohydrates are digested easier and quicker than complex carbohydrates. Examples of simple carbohydrates include sugar, fruit juice, yogurt, honey, syrup, and white starches (white bread, white rice, crackers). A complex carbohydrate consists of three or more sugars, take longer to digest and are higher in fiber (oatmeal, whole grain starches).

All carbohydrates have a place in a healthy diet. Of course CHOBANI or other brands of yogurt offer plenty of nutritional benefit. Which is why I wanted to clarify the message of the advertisement.

The nutritional composition of your snack should depend on your goal. If you are short on fruit for the day, and choose a piece of fruit well you will gain vitamins, minerals, a little fiber and fructose (sugar in fruit). If

your snack is to sustain you for many hours be sure it is well rounded: fat, protein and carbohydrates – trail mix, yogurt topped with nuts, hardboiled egg on a slice of whole wheat bread.

## Swim Meet Concessions

The article claims, “simple carbohydrates will not sustain your energy for a 50 or a 500.” However, with an anxious belly a simple carbohydrate can be ideal, to provide your child with a boost of nutrition without creating an upset stomach. Additionally, it will most definitely sustain you through a 50 and a 500. Also, many of the “examples of champion swim snacks” include simple carbohydrate options (low fat milk, yogurt, fruit, apple chips, fig bars, applesauce).

Yes, healthy options should be available at swim meet concessions; however, they still may not have what your body is used to. If your child asks for a pack of skittles, probably best as an “after the meet” treat. We are all parents, sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do, and if a promise of a bag of skittles at the end of meet will improve your weekend meet, I understand.

Although, it is best to go prepared to the meet with the foods your child is accustomed

to snacking on every day. Swim meets are not the time to introduce new foods or to overindulge your child in “treats”.

Swim meet snacking can be trial and error. The day is just different and lessons are often learned from one meet to the next. Do your best to keep the food “normal”

## Monthly challenge:

Teenage Athlete- Use smaller meets as a trial run with food choices, so when state comes around you know what works best.

Parents – Have healthy snacks available every day. Summer time seems to present us with hungrier kids so have good choices available.