

3 plays for a healthy team

There are **3 simple things** you can do during training and matches to keep players healthy and performing their best. Use this tip sheet to put these 3 plays into action!

1

MOVE MORE: Boost active time by 10-15 minutes

- Aim to run “games-based” training using small group activities that keep all players active.
- Have players help you demonstrate skills to keep them moving more.
- Teach players light-intensity movements that they can do to stay active if they’re waiting to enter an activity.

Myth: Players get 60 minutes of physical activity during an hour-long youth sports practice.

Fact: A practice may last an hour, but studies* show children are typically moving **less than half** the time. Increasing the time they are active by 10-15 minutes can make a big difference.

2

DRINK RIGHT: Make water the easy choice

- Remind players to bring 1-2 full water bottles for trainings and matches. Consider a “water-only sideline” to encourage your team to drink water.
- Let parents and players know that doctors recommend water, *not* sports drinks. Consider opportunities when you could share this message with your team.

Myth: Players need the electrolytes in sports drinks to stay hydrated.

Fact: To stay hydrated, replenishing electrolytes isn’t necessary if players are eating a healthy diet and drinking water. Sticking to water also helps players avoid the added sugar in sports drinks.

3

SNACK SMART: Make snacks fruits or vegetables

- If you serve a team snack, have parents rotate bringing sliced oranges, apples or carrot sticks, for example.
- For back-to-back matches, encourage players to pack a healthy lunch.
- Remember, players may not need a snack if they eat a healthy meal before they come to the field!

Myth: A treat at training or matches isn’t a big deal when it comes to a child’s health.

Fact: Treats can add up, since children often have them outside of soccer, as well. Desserts, soda and pizza are the top 3 sources of calories in a typical child’s diet. Encourage fruits or vegetables for snacks and save the treats for special occasions.

*Leek et al. (2010), Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine; Wickel & Eisenmann (2007), Journal of the American College of Sports Medicine.