

# POINTERS FOR PARENTS

## A Convenient Way To Keep Young Athletes Hydrated

(NAPSA)—Any way you slice it, watermelon can be a healthful snack, particularly when you want to make sure young athletes are getting enough liquids.

Parents are often concerned about the amount of fluids their children get before, during and after sporting activities. These liquids can come in the form of water, sports drinks and fresh fruit snacks, such as slices of watermelon.

As any mom or dad with a young athlete can tell you, parents of team members often take turns providing snacks for their young athletes. "Ideally, these snacks should be a fruit with a high water content," says Barbara Levine, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Nutrition in Clinical Medicine and Director, Nutrition Information Center, Weill College of Medicine of Cornell University, New York, NY.

"Watermelon," says Levine, "is a favorite fruit among kids and is called the natural hydrator because it's 92 percent water. For sports activities, watermelon served in slices is easy for children and teens to eat. An inch-wide slice contains about a cup of fruit.

"And watermelon is more than a delicious thirst quencher," adds Levine. "It contains important vitamins and phytochemicals for growing bodies. A two-cup serving of watermelon has 20 percent of the daily recommended intake of vitamin A and 25 percent of the daily value of vitamin C. It's also a source of potassium and a leader in the powerful antioxidant lycopene."

Keeping children well hydrated should be a priority, especially



**In addition to being an efficient way to keep kids hydrated, watermelon has vitamins A and C, potassium and lycopene.**

when they are members of competing sports teams.

Suzanne Nelson Steen, D.Sc., R.D., head of the Husky Sports Nutrition Services in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at the University of Washington in Seattle, offers excellent advice on the subject on the Web site [www.momsteam.com](http://www.momsteam.com). "Kids should drink on a schedule, not just when they are thirsty," says Steen.

"By the time your child says he is thirsty, he is already dehydrated," she advises. She says that children should be reminded to drink five to nine ounces of water (10 to 18 half-ounce "gulps") every 20 minutes during activity and teenagers should drink more.

Finally, Dr. Steen reminds parents that kids' fluid intake needs to be supervised because children do not instinctively drink enough fluids to replace water losses.

With a little planning, you can help ensure that your children are well hydrated and happy.