

Total Nutrition

Playing It Safe

(NAPSA)—If you're a parent of active children, your garage probably looks like mine—helmets for bicycling, skating, skiing, and baseball; knee and wrist pads; and plenty of goggles. The proper equipment makes sports safer and more enjoyable. Play it safe and keep these additional tips in mind:



Mindy Hermann

Choose the right safety gear and make sure it fits properly. Inspect gear before the start of the season; replace as necessary if worn or broken.

Step up training gradually. Too much pitching, batting or running at the beginning of the season could lead to injury. Help keep the family in shape year-round by planning physical activities for the "off" season.

Dress correctly for the weather and time of day. Wear layers that can be taken off as the body warms up. Avoid heavy activity during the hottest hours of the day. For running or walking during early morning or evening hours, wear a jacket and shoes with reflective strips that are visible to oncoming cars.

Prepare for the activity with a healthy meal about 90 minutes to three hours ahead of time. Meals that are high in complex carbohydrate and low in fat, like Whole Grain Total with skim milk and fruit, are easy to digest and provide long-lasting energy. Remem-

Fluid Guidelines

Drink up to two cups of fluid 15 to 30 minutes before exercise.

Drink four to eight ounces (three to six gulps) of cold fluid every 10 to 15 minutes.

Drink three cups of fluid for every pound lost during activity.



ber to pack a nonperishable snack like fruit, a granola bar, or trail mix made with Whole Grain Total and nuts or raisins for long practices or competitions.

Drink enough fluids. "Water often is fine for short-term activities," advises Jackie Berning, Ph.D., R.D., associate professor at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. "If activity lasts over an hour or takes place outside in hot weather, sports drinks can provide fluids, energy, and the mineral sodium, which is lost in sweat."

Know the rules of the game to help prevent sloppy play that can lead to injuries.

Ask Mindy

Q: How can I fit in three meals a day during the height of sports season? We barely have any free time.

A: Start the day with a balanced breakfast that includes foods from three or four food groups—grains, milk, fruit, and maybe a protein food like eggs or cottage cheese. Divide lunch and dinner into smaller meals and snacks that can be eaten before and after activity.