

Eat to Compete

Safe Snacks

Karen Armstrong RD

Snacks are an important part of a good nutrition plan. When you're at school or work all day, you need snacks that won't spoil in your backpack or gear bag.

Here are some ideas that don't need refrigeration:

- Granola and cereal bars. Check the nutrient information panel on the box for the sugar and fibre content in the bars. Choose bars with lower amounts of sugar, and more fibre.
- Dry cereal or dry cereal mixed with dried fruit and nuts.
- Unsalted nuts (almonds, peanuts).
- Energy bars. Choose a store bought bar or try making your own. Google "homemade energy bars" and you'll find hundreds of interesting recipes. Homemade bars are a fraction of the cost of store bought bars and it's a great way to learn to bake. Homemade bars freeze really well so double your favourite recipe.
- Fresh or dried fruit. This seems obvious but fruit is the original portable snack. Just make sure to pack fresh fruit so it doesn't get squished in your bag.
- Juice boxes. These are a nice break from drinking water. Look for 100% juice rather than fruit drinks or fruit beverages. Fruit juice will give you some vitamins and minerals along with energy and fluid. Fruit drinks and beverages are just sugar, water and flavourings.
- Dried fruit and nut mixes. Make your own blend of dried fruits and nuts, or try one of the many mixes in the bulk food section of the grocery store or at the bulk food stores.
- Whole grain crackers and nut butter (peanut, almond or Nutella).
- Sports drinks

If you're able to, keep a stash of snacks (juice boxes, granola bars, dried fruit, nuts etc) in your locker, at your desk, or in the car. This way you'll always have a snack handy in case you forget to pack something in your bag or you need a little something extra.

Karen Armstrong is a Registered Dietitian with Manitoba Chicken Producers (www.chicken.mb.ca). She's an age group triathlete, masters swimmer, recreational skijorer and parent of a competitive swimmer. Look for more tips and information on eating to compete in upcoming issues of Coaches Clipboard. Karen can be reached at karmstrong@chicken.mb.ca.