

# Evaluation of a Shift to Healthier Concessions at a Youth Basketball Tournament

## Why are healthier concessions important?

- In Minnesota, about one in four 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys and one in five 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls are overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>
- Obesity in childhood increases one's risk for heart disease and metabolic, digestive, respiratory, skeletal and psychosocial disorders.<sup>2</sup>
- Youth who participate in sport are just as likely to be overweight or obese as youth who do not participate in sport.<sup>3</sup>
- Compared to non-participants, kids who participate in sport:
  - Consume more calories overall
  - Are more likely to eat at fast-food restaurants
  - Are more likely to drink sugar-sweetened beverages
- Sports drinks are standard offerings at concessions.
  - A standard size bottle of Gatorade (32 fl oz) contains about 13 teaspoons of sugar.
  - The percentage of youth consuming sports drinks is increasing and they are drinking more of it than previously.<sup>4</sup>
  - Sports drinks are heavily marketed towards youth athletes.<sup>4</sup>
- Unhealthy food and drinks are everywhere in youth sport settings. Below is a typical concession menu.



<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Department of Education (2010). *Minnesota Student Survey*, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup> Daniels, S. R. (2006). The consequences of childhood overweight and obesity. *The Future of Children*, 16(1), 47-67.

<sup>3</sup> Nelson, T. F., Stovitz, S. D., Thomas, M., LaVoi, N. M., Bauer, K. W., & Neumark-Sztainer, D. (2011). Do youth sports prevent pediatric obesity? A systematic review and commentary. *Current Sports Medicine Reports*, 10(6), 360-370.

<sup>4</sup> Story, M. & Klein, L. (June 2012). Consumption of sports drinks by children and adolescents: A research review. *Healthy Eating Research and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*.

## How were our concessions healthier than previous years?

- **Healthier drink options**
  - Options included low-calorie sports drinks, zero-calorie vitamin-enhanced water, flavored milk
- **Healthier snack options**
  - Options included fruit, baked chips and pretzels, nuts and trail mix, string cheese, fruit smoothies
  - Only one candy option was available compared to eight at the 2012 tournament.

## What did we find?


- **Sports drinks are frequently purchased for youth.**
  - Many adults purchased sports drinks for their children at this tournament.
  - Adults think their children need to “replenish” after physical activity.
- **Tournament attendees want healthy options.**
  - Most participants think it is very or somewhat important that youth sporting events offer healthy food options to children.
  - Most participants limit their child’s purchases based on the health of the item at least sometimes.
- **Tournament attendees were pleased with the changes to the concessions but thought more could be done to improve the health of the concessions.**
  - Most participants thought our concessions were somewhat healthier than “typical” concessions.
  - Participants were pleased with the healthier options offered at this tournament, but also wanted healthier meal options like sandwiches.
- **Tournament attendees do not support explicit policies banning candy or soda.**
  - Participants were glad about the limited candy options available at the tournament; however, most participants oppose a policy banning the sale of candy at concessions.
  - Most participants also oppose a ban on soda at concessions. It appears adults oppose this because they purchase it for themselves. One participant stated, “You can police a kid, but don’t police adults.”

## What should be done to further improve the health of the concessions?

- Eliminate sugary sports drinks from concessions at youth sporting events.
- Educate parents, coaches and youth that water is a healthy and adequate source of hydration.
- Offer healthier meal options like sandwiches.

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