

# OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

In 2011, North Carolina was ranked 18th in the nation for childhood obesity, with a rate of 16.1% for children ages 10 to 17. In addition, one-third of North Carolina youth are overweight or obese. North Carolina youth only eat two of the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Furthermore, only 29% of youth engage in adequate physical activity on a daily basis.

The 27 North Carolina YMCA Associations are the largest providers of childcare and after school programs in the state; more than 350,000 youth are enrolled in youth programs at NC YMCAs, including youth sports programs.

## WHY THE Y?

The YMCA stands for healthy living, youth development, and social responsibility. Youth sports nutrition successfully bridges the gap between healthy living and youth development. While the health benefits from physical activity through sport and athletics are widely accepted, the importance of sound nutrition practices for sport and athletic success is often overlooked and seldom promoted. Organizations that provide, sponsor and support youth sports and athletics should be committed to promoting practices that are based on sound evidence and consider the best interest of the youth participant.

The YMCA should aim to provide access to healthy foods and beverages in all aspects of the youth sport and athletics experience including before, during and after practices and games, at concessions and through fundraising efforts. Such commitment and practice provides a clear message that a healthy diet is consistent with good health and optimal athletic performance.

The purpose of this toolkit is to assist in the implementation of healthy sports snack practices for YMCA associations across the state of North Carolina. As a leading provider of youth programming, YMCA's have a responsibility to lead the way in improving the health of the youth in North Carolina communities.

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<sup>1</sup>Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2014). The State of Obesity. Retrieved from <http://stateofobesity.org/states/nc/>.

<sup>2</sup>Prevalence of Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors Among US Adolescents 1999-2008. Ashleigh L. May, Elena V. Kuklin and Paul W. Yoon Pediatrics; originally published online May 21, 2012.

<sup>3</sup>NC State Center for Health Statistics. (2011). 2011 Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program data. Retrieved from <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/champ/2011/topics.html#n>

<sup>4</sup>NC State Center for Health Statistics. (2011). 2011 Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program data. Retrieved from <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/champ/2011/topics.html#n>