

Background

- There are > 27,000 Special Olympics (SO) athletes in Michigan.¹
- For every 10 athletes on a SO team:
 - 2–3 have low bone density.
 - 6 are overweight or obese and at risk for chronic health conditions.²
- SO athletes are at risk for diabetes, arthritis, and cardiovascular disease.

References:

1. <https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/leading-a-program/program-profiles/MichiganFactSheet3.4.19.pdf>
2. <https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/inclusive-health/healthy-athletes?locale=en>

Aim

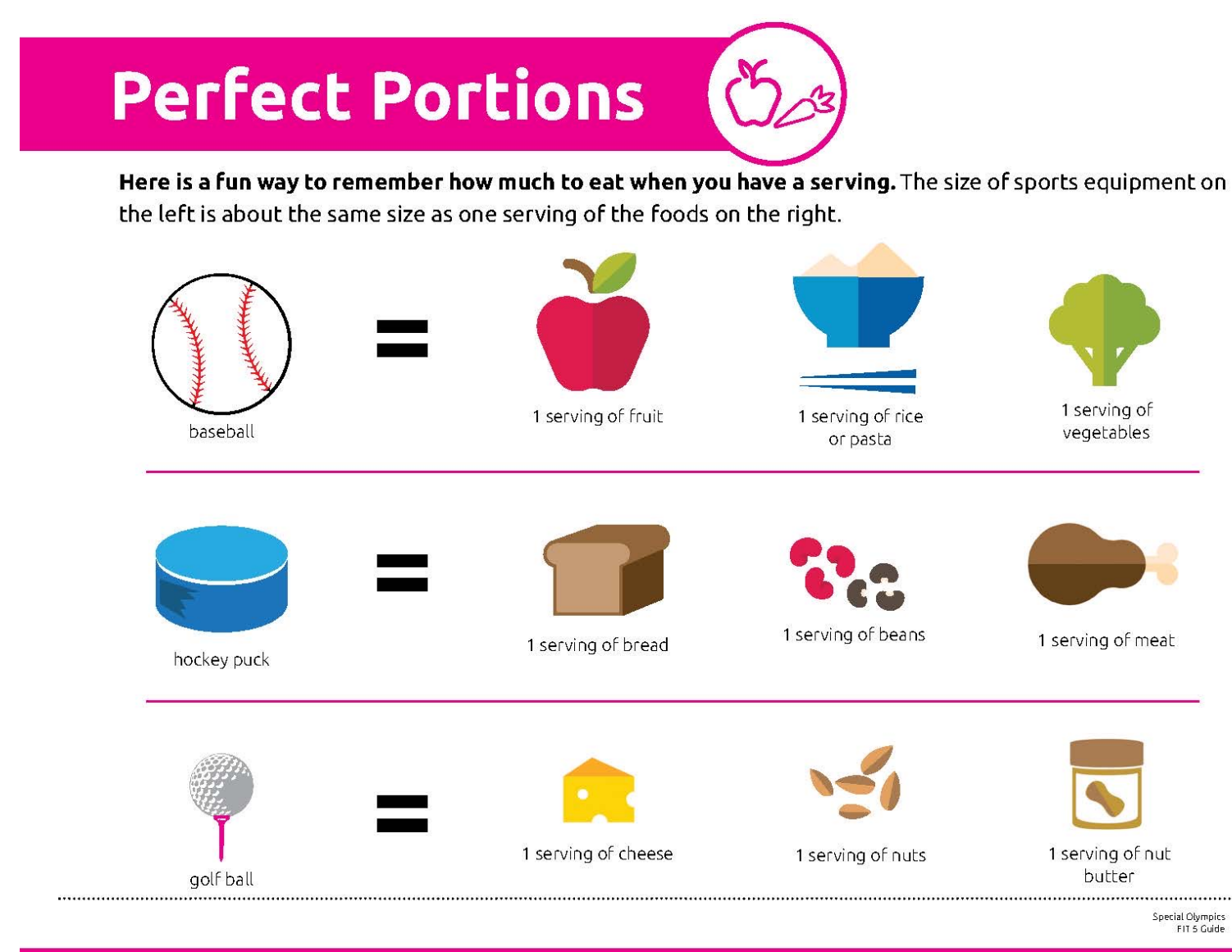
- Enhance the nutrition guide provided to SO coaches to educate on athlete nutrition



2019 Fall Games-Soccer
 2019 & 2020 photos courtesy of SO Michigan

Coaches' Guide

- Modeled from SO of Washington Healthy Food and Beverage Toolkit
- Existing guide from SO of Michigan included 3 pages covering hydration, macronutrient, vitamin and mineral descriptions, and timing of eating for events
- Enhanced guide includes 7 pages with many colorful images
- Topics include: how to be a role model for healthy behaviors, communication of healthy messages, how to choose healthy snacks, portion sizes, and a pre-event checklist



4 Sections in Coaches' Guide

- Model healthy behavior
- Practice positive messaging and communication
- Offer healthy snacks at competitions and practices
 - Snack guidelines
 - Examples of healthy snacks
- Choose healthy options on the road
 - Promote healthy portion sizes

Cost Comparison of Healthy Snacks vs. Other Snacks

- Coaches concerned about cost of healthy snacks
- Guide includes a cost comparison of healthy snacks vs. other snacks
- Grocery store website and fast-food website was used for pricing
- Avg. price of one serving of a healthy snack (n=23) was \$0.65.
- Avg. price of one serving of a snack that did not fit the guidelines (n=10) was \$0.73.

Athletes and Nutrition: What Effective Coaches Need to Know

Snack on this	\$0.52 per serving fruit and nut trail mix	\$0.47 per serving sweet treats	Not this!
	\$0.25 per serving fresh fruit and vegetables	\$0.25 per serving fruit snacks	
	\$0.50 per serving light string cheese or plain yogurt	\$0.60 per serving sweetened yogurt and processed cheese snacks	
	\$0.22 per serving popcorn and rice cakes	\$0.39 per serving cheese puffs	
	\$0.12 per serving water	\$0.49 per serving soda and sports drinks	

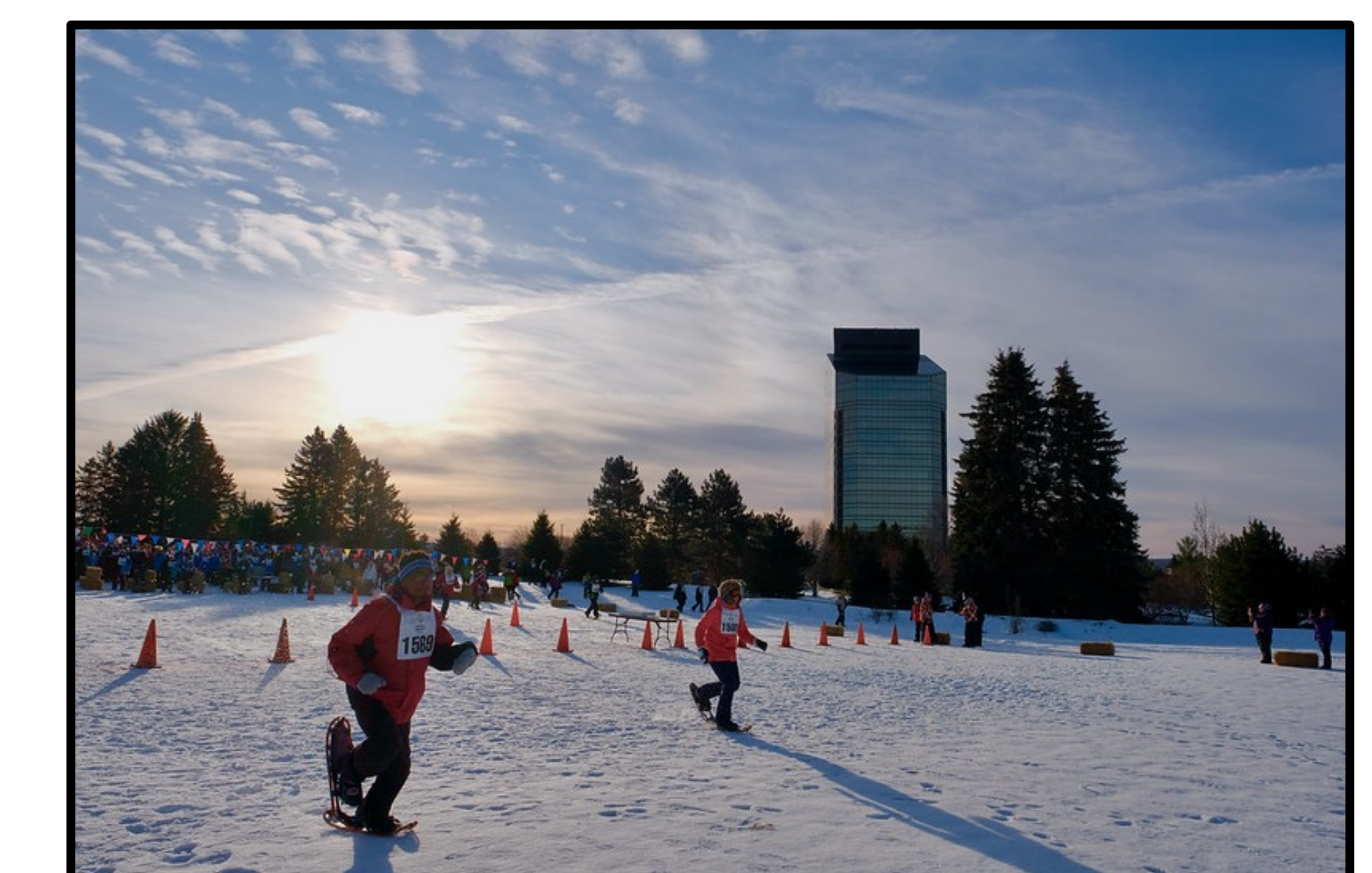
Adapted by EMU REACH with permission from Special Olympics Washington, Healthy Food & Beverage Toolkit, 2020.

Evaluation

- We are continuing to provide ongoing nutrition education through webinar presentations and providing social media posts.
- We will be following up with SO staff and coaches to evaluate the guide and evaluate compliance.



2019 Fall Games-Flag Football



2020 Winter Games-Snowshoe

Acknowledgment

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