

Healthy Eating for Athletes on the Road



Healthy eating can help you perform your best during a sports event or competition. When travelling, the key to making healthy food and beverage choices is to plan meals and snacks ahead of time.

Tips for Healthy Eating Before, During and After Competition

1. Drink fluids, especially plain water, before, during and after the sports event. It is important to keep your body hydrated in order to perform your best. You can also get fluid from other sources such as soups, white or chocolate milk, 100% fruit and vegetable juices and whole vegetables and fruit.
2. Choose familiar foods and beverages that you have tried during training. Don't eat or drink anything new on competition day in case it causes an upset stomach.
3. Make healthy choices by following the recommendations in Canada's Food Guide.

Food Group	Benefit	Healthy Tip
Vegetables and Fruit	Energy for muscles and helps with concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice
Grain Products	Energy for muscles and helps with concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose whole grain products when possible
Milk and Alternatives	Energy, growth and repair of muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a glass of milk with your meals or snacks
Meat and Alternatives	Growth and repair of muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose lean cuts of meat and trim off fat; remove skin from poultry • Try meat alternatives like eggs, nuts, seeds, nut butters, beans or lentils • Limit or avoid processed meats such as bologna, weiners, bacon, sausage and pepperoni

Plan and Pack Your Meals

- Take a trip to the grocery store rather than relying on restaurants for all your meals and snacks.
- Buy and properly store perishable items in a cooler such as yogurt, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Book a hotel room with a kitchenette that includes a microwave and a fridge.
- Make a balanced meal by choosing a food from each of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide. For a tasty meal try tuna in a whole grain pita with fruit and a glass of milk.
- Prepare a quick breakfast. Try oatmeal with fruit or whole grain bread with peanut butter and a glass of milk.

For more healthy food and beverage ideas, check out Canada's Food Guide at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide and Dietitians of Canada at www.dietitians.ca

Pack a Snack

Before hitting the road, pack portable healthy items for snacks and meals. Here are some great examples:

- Whole grain crackers, bagels, breads, rolls, pitas, soft tortillas or whole grain English muffins
- Whole, canned or dried fruit
- Canned tuna, salmon or chicken
- Whole grain cereal (mini-boxes or pack your own in containers or bags)
- Individual packages of oatmeal
- Cereal or granola bars (not chocolate covered)
- Lower fat, higher fibre muffins
- Air-popped or lower fat popcorn
- Trail mix
- Peanut butter or nut butters
- Plain water
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice



Fast Food Choices

Fast food chains are often the first stop for athletes when on the road because they are considered convenient, familiar and relatively inexpensive. However, many of these foods are high in fat, sugar and salt and low in nutritional value. Also watch out for "meal deals" which are often large portion sizes.

For better nutrition, choose...	Instead of...
Bagels, lower fat muffins, whole wheat toast, pancakes	Donuts, croissants, breakfast sandwiches with fatty meats like bacon, bologna, and sausage
Grilled chicken sandwiches, chicken pizza with lots of veggies, wrap on whole grain pita or tortilla, plain hamburgers	Deep-fried chicken sandwiches, multiple patty burgers with sauce, pizza with salami, pepperoni or bacon, hot dogs
Milk, 100% juice, plain water	Pop, energy drinks, sweetened hot and cold drinks (e.g. cappuccinos, fruit punches, flavoured water)
Salad (choose oil-based dressing), baked potato, chili, soup	French fries and onion rings
Subs with turkey, grilled chicken, roast beef or tuna on a whole wheat bun, and pile on the veggies	Subs with fatty meats (e.g. bologna, salami, pepperoni or bacon) and high fat sauces
Yogurt parfaits	Sundaes, pies, cakes, cookies