

# Healthy Eating for Athletes on the Road



Healthy eating can help you perform your best during a sports event or competition. When traveling, 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 white milk or unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages such as soy or almond milk, whole vegetables and fruit, and soups.
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.

	Benefit	Healthy Tip
Vegetables and fruit	Energy for muscles and helps with concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruit</li> </ul>
Whole grain foods	Energy for muscles and helps with concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose whole grain products when possible such as breads, wraps, crackers and brown rice</li> </ul>
Protein foods	Energy, growth and repair of muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy plant-based protein foods more often like nuts, seeds, nut butters, beans or lentils</li> <li>• Enjoy other protein foods like eggs, fish, poultry, lean red meat, white milk, yogurt, and cheese</li> <li>• Choose lean cuts of meat and trim off fat; remove skin from poultry</li> </ul>

## Plan and Pack Your Meals

- Take a trip to the grocery store rather than relying on restaurants for all your meals and snacks.
- Book a hotel room with a kitchenette that includes a microwave and a fridge so you don't have to rely on take-out.
- Buy and properly store perishable items in a cooler such as yogurt, white milk, cheese, and fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Make a healthy meal by choosing foods from Canada's Food Guide. For a tasty meal try tuna in a whole grain pita topped with veggies and cheese, with fruit and a glass of water.
- Prepare a quick breakfast. Try oatmeal with fruit, or whole grain bread with peanut butter and a glass of white milk.

## Pack a Snack

**Before hitting the road, pack portable healthy snack items. Here are some great examples:**

- Whole grain crackers, bagels, breads, rolls, pitas, soft tortillas or English muffins
- Whole fruit
- Canned fruit (in juice or light syrup)
- Canned tuna, salmon or chicken
- Whole grain cereal (mini-boxes or pack your own in containers or bags)
- Individual packages of unsweetened oatmeal
- Whole grain cereal or granola bars (not chocolate or yogurt dipped)
- Whole grain muffins
- Plain popcorn
- Trail mix
- Peanut butter or nut butters
- Yogurt, fruit, granola (place yogurt in a cooler bag)
- Plain water

## 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 saturated fat, sugar and salt, and low in nutritional value. Also watch out for "meal deals" which are often large portion.

For better nutrition, choose...	Instead of...
Whole grain bagels or toast with peanut butter, muffins, pancakes with fruit and yogurt	Donuts, croissants, breakfast sandwiches with processed meats like bacon, bologna, and sausage
Grilled chicken sandwiches, chicken pizza with veggies, wrap on whole grain pita or tortilla, hamburgers lettuce and tomato	Deep-fried chicken sandwiches, multiple patty burgers with sauce, pizza with salami, pepperoni or bacon, hot dogs
Plain water, white milk or unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages such as soy or almond milk	Pop, juice, chocolate milk, sports or energy drinks, sweetened hot and cold drinks (e.g., cappuccinos, fruit punches, flavoured water)
Salad, baked potato, chili, soup	French fries and onion rings
Yogurt parfaits	Sundaes, pies, cakes, cookies

### Questions?

Contact Eat Great and Participate's Registered Dietitian at [mpark@recreationnl.com](mailto:mpark@recreationnl.com), or (709) 729-4490.

### For more healthy eating resources, check out:

**Eat Great and Participate:** [recreationnl.com/eat-great-participate](http://recreationnl.com/eat-great-participate)

**Canada's Food Guide:** [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](http://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)

**Half Your Plate:** [halfyourplate.ca](http://halfyourplate.ca)