

# Healthy Eating for Athletes on the Road



Eating healthy food can help you perform your best during a sports competition. When travelling, the key to making healthy food 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. You need to keep your body hydrated in order to perform your best. You can also get fluid from other sources such as soups, vegetables and fruit, white or chocolate milk, and 100% fruit juice.
2. Choose familiar foods that you have tried during training. Don't try new foods on competition day in case they cause an upset stomach.
3. Make healthy food choices by following the guidelines in *Canada's Food Guide*:

Food Group	Benefit	Healthy Tip
Vegetables and Fruit	Energy for muscles and helps concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice</li> </ul>
Grain Products	Energy for muscles and helps concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose whole grain products when possible</li> </ul>
Milk and Alternatives	Energy, growth and repair of muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a glass of milk with your meals or snacks</li> </ul>
Meat and Alternatives	Growth and repair of muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose lean meats and remove the skin or any visible fat</li> <li>• Choose lower sodium (salt) options</li> <li>• Try meat alternatives like eggs, nuts, seeds, nut butters, beans or lentils</li> </ul>

## Plan and Pack Your Meals

- Take a trip to the grocery store rather than relying on restaurants for all your meals.
- Buy and properly store perishable items 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 food groups in *Canada's Food Guide*. For a tasty meal try canned tuna and bread 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 healthy food ideas, check out *Canada's Food Guide* at [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) and the *Brand Name Food List* available at [www.livingheathyschools.com](http://www.livingheathyschools.com)

## Pack a Snack

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

- Whole grain crackers, bagels, breads, rolls, pitas, soft tortillas, 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 (no sugar added)



## 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, or 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, bacon, hot dogs
Milk, 100% juice, plain water	Pop, energy drinks, sweetened hot and cold drinks (cappuccinos, fruit punches, flavoured water)
Salad (choose light dressing), baked potato, chili, soup	French fries or onion rings
Subs with turkey, grilled chicken, roast beef or tuna on a whole wheat bun, and pile on the veggies (choose light dressing).	Subs with fatty meats (bologna, salami, pepperoni or bacon) and high fat sauces
Yogurt parfaits	Sundaes, pies, cakes, cookies