



Many of us travel long distances by car particularly during the summer months. And many of us snack in our cars as we commute or for quicker trips as well. We are people on the go!!

**What are some healthier food choices to take along in the car?**

Many people fall into the trap of eating too much during a trip due to boredom. So it's best not to pack excessive amounts of anything (except maybe veggies since most of us need more of them!) Bring along other distractions for passengers such as music, books on tape, puzzle books, games (I'm hooked on Soduku!) so that riders don't rely on food to cope with their boredom. Choose foods that are relatively "mess less"—finger foods are the easiest.

Consider taking along an insulated cooler to keep perishables cool for your trip. This allows you to do a picnic at a rest area and avoid the crowds and fast food! (more on meals on the road below)

Beverages in containers that can be closed work best. Go for the water, unsweetened ice tea, 100% juices and lower calorie drinks as you won't be expending many calories sitting all day. You can freeze water bottles or 100% juice boxes prior to departure and you will have a cold drink for quite some time. Limit sugary drinks as they don't offer any nutritional value and often make you thirstier!

You can pre-portion snacks into single serving bags to control intake and limit mess. Prewashed and sliced fruits and veggies in plastic containers or zip-lock bags work well. Choose grapes, apples, berries, oranges, melon—if they are seedless and there is no pit that helps! Think color and go for baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, various colored peppers, broccoli and cauliflower.

Nuts of all kinds are a heart healthy treat. <http://www.nuthealth.org/> Look for those with lower salt content to reduce your sodium intake and prevent thirst. Since they are dense in calories, pre-portion or buy pre-packed bags or count them rather than downing handfuls! (That's so easy to do if you love nuts!) A serving of nuts is 1 ounce—see attached sheet on how many that is for various nut types.

Whole grain cereals can be a healthful and crunchy snack—make sure the first ingredient on the ingredient list contains the word "whole". Aim for less than 19 g of sugar and more than 3 g of fiber per serving (the higher the better!) Consider Cinnamon Life, Multigrain Cheerios, Oatmeal Squares and others your family members enjoy. Pre-pack them in one cup portion zip-lock bags. Perhaps consider making a homemade trail mix with whole grain cereal, dried fruit and nuts. It can also be pre-measured into bags and will travel well.

If chips are a must then consider lower calorie options and buy individual packs to aid in portion control. Or consider some of the 100-calorie packs offered by various food companies (such as wheat thins, cheese nips, pretzels, etc).

With a cooler along you can bring yogurt (cups, tubes or drinkable bottles) to get in your dairy foods and boost your calcium and vitamin D intake and get your dose of healthy bacteria (probiotics) <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/probiotics/index.htm> Also, consider lower fat individually wrapped string cheese and some whole grain crackers.

Granola bars are ready to go but read labels carefully and choose one that is reasonable in calories (160 or less), is low in saturated and trans fat (ideally less than 3 grams combined) and offers some fiber (at least 2 grams) from whole grains, fruit or nuts. Try to avoid those with chocolate or added candy (that ramps up the sugar and calories and the chocolate may melt en route!)

### **Meals on the go?**

When planning breakfast on the run—aim to include at least 3 food groups and focus on lower fat and whole grain options. Something with protein will sustain you through the morning longer. Here's a novel breakfast idea—toast 2 whole grain waffles, spread natural peanut butter on one and top with the other. Cut into 4 pieces. Serve with skim milk or fruit/juice. How about a hard-boiled egg, bag of dry whole grain cereal and a piece of fruit to go? Melt some cheese on one side of a whole wheat tortilla and fold the top over for a quick quesadilla or between a toasted whole grain bagel or English muffin—serve with fruit. These breakfasts would be quicker and cheaper (and certainly healthier!) than visiting the drive-thru lane of a fast food place!

For lunch or dinner along the road try a picnic—you may even want to stand at the table at the rest area so you can really stretch out those legs! For something different than a traditional sandwich, consider a wrap with turkey, chicken, ham, tofu or beans with a variety of veggies in a whole wheat tortilla. Moisten the tortilla with reduced calorie mayo, hummus, lower calorie salad dressing of choice, mustard or BBQ sauce. Or spread the WW tortilla with peanut butter, add a banana and roll it up! A pasta salad with veggies and a protein source such as canned salmon or tuna, chicken or beans coated with light Italian or Greek dressing would be easy and tasty. Or leftovers from home that can be eaten chilled (such as baked chicken) is another option. Serve with fruit and/or veggies and some whole grain crackers.

Anywhere along the way you can stretch or do some quick activity will be beneficial to keep the blood moving. A few walking laps at a rest area can make a difference! Once you arrive check out activity opportunities in the area! Most of us eat more on vacations and extra activity can help with caloric balance. You will likely have more free time so commit some of it to being active each day! Keep in mind, the exercise recommendations are 30 minutes of moderate activity daily for general health and weight maintenance and 60 minutes or more of moderate activity for weight loss.

If summer has you thinking about healthier eating and you would like to use your employee benefit of meeting with a Registered Dietitian for 3 visits per calendar year, I am here for most of the summer and available for nutrition counseling. Just give me a call (4-9625) or respond to this e-mail.

Also, there will be a lunch-and-learn on "Eating Healthy with the Summer Season" on Thursday July 26 at noon in Curtiss 208. Please join me if you can!!

Enjoy your summer (or daily) travels and be healthy!

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