

Walk
NEBRASKA

Eating On the Go

Tic-tock, tic-tock, tic-tock . . . that's the sound of time flying by while you juggle job, family and other commitments while also trying to squeeze in time for relaxation and physical fitness. As you rush from one activity to the next, it's often more convenient to grab the nearest quick food without considering the effect on your health. It may be faster to grab something from the vending machine or quick mart, but are you making the best food choice within your time limitation?

- **Start your day right** by eating before you leave the house. Fruit, whole-grain cereal with skim milk, and low fat yogurt are options that will jumpstart your day making it less likely you will give in to temptation while you are out and about. To help with the morning rush, set the table and check your ingredient supplies before you go to bed. Set your coffee maker so that your coffee is ready when you wake up and go out the door with you.
- **On the Road Dining:** Are you one of the 30% of Americans who “dash board dines” — that is, eats in your car at least two times a week? Wiser snacks for short trips include: bottled water, fruit, nuts, trail mix, or 100 calorie portion snacks. For longer trips, make a sandwich on whole wheat bread and prepare a bag of bite size fresh vegetables. Freeze a bottle of water to keep your lunch cool and to drink later in the day. Also include napkins, pre-moistened towelettes, and a trash bag. It is far more relaxing to enjoy an impromptu healthy food picnic than to gulp down a fast food burger and fries in a parking lot.
- **In the Office:** Plan ahead for those times when you eat while you are at work. If you have access to a refrigerator, freezer and microwave, keep frozen meals, soups, or oatmeal packets available. Bring fresh fruit or a salad from home to round out your meal. A desk drawer survival kit containing whole-grain crackers, a jar of peanut butter, dried fruit, and trail mix can make it much easier to resist the call from the vending machine. Packing your lunch at home saves time, money and calories. A well-balanced lunch should be rich in fiber and contain carbohydrates as well as lean protein. Build your lunch box by starting with a whole grain pita pocket or bread, add a protein source such as water packet tuna, low fat cheese, or lean meat. Add vegetable toppings such as salad greens, sliced green pepper strips, sliced cucumbers, and tomatoes. Keep food safety in mind: moist protein food such as meats and eggs are prone to spoilage, so keep your lunch in an insulated bag cooled with an ice pack or refrigerated.
- **Meals on the Move:** Healthy eating on the run is a challenge. When eating out, remember that all of the health conscious options are only helpful if you choose them. For most people occasional fast food meals will not upset an otherwise healthy diet and lifestyle. However, moderation is important. Take a tip from those who rely on their food as fuel for performance: be prepared so your healthy eating doesn't hit the skids when you hit the road.

References:

Franz, M.J., *Fast Food Facts*, IDC Publishing, Minneapolis, MN. 1998.

Geil, P. and L. Hieronymus, “Eating on the Go”, *Diabetes Self-Management*, September /October, 2008. p. 6-12.

McClendon, M. and C. Shauck, *The Healthy Lunchbox, How to Plan, Prepare and Pack Stress-Free Meals Kids will Love*, Small Steps Press, Alexandria, VA 2005.

Warshaw, H.S., *Guide to Healthy Restaurant Eating, What to Eat in America's Popular Family and Chain Restaurants*, 3rd Edition, American Diabetes Association, Alexandria, VA 2005.

Know how. Know now.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.