

## Too Busy to Cook? It's All About Prep

How long does it take you to order takeout for dinner or to wait in the lunchtime line at the sandwich counter? In the same amount of time (maybe even less), you can make healthy meals for yourself at home. All it takes is a little preparation. **Try these ideas:**



- **Wash** and dry fruits and vegetables as soon as you get home from the store so they are ready to use.
- **Buy** precut, packaged fruits and vegetables when you can. Nowadays you can get a complete salad in a bag. Add cooked, chopped chicken breast or canned tuna, and you've got lunch.
- **Cook** larger amounts on your days off, and freeze some in single-serving containers. Good choices include soups, stews and pasta dishes.
- **Make** your daily lunch and snacks the night before, to save time during the morning rush.
- **Plan** the week's worth of breakfasts, lunches and dinners when making your grocery list so you'll have all ingredients on hand — and meals planned in advance.
- **Package** leftovers in single-serving containers so they are easy to take along for lunches or snacks.

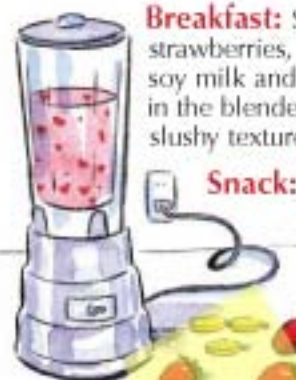
**Homemade meals have many advantages:** You control the ingredients ... you can make them to suit your unique tastes ... they can save your pocketbook, your waistline and your health.

### *Sick of plain old lettuce and tomato?*

Salads are the ultimate quick food. **Add one of these flavorful ingredients:** garbanzo beans, mandarin orange segments, fresh spinach, arugula, raisins, dried cranberries, walnuts. The possibilities are endless, as are the health benefits.

## No-Cook Food Ideas

You can toss together a fast meal or snack without turning on your stove. **Try these ideas for healthy eating throughout the day:**



**Breakfast:** Smoothie. Combine 5-6 strawberries, one banana, half a cup of soy milk and one cup of fat-free yogurt in the blender. Use frozen fruit for a slushy texture.

**Snack:** Peanut butter over a sliced apple or celery; or a serving of low-fat "kettle" popcorn with about 10 almonds and 100% fruit juice.

**Lunch:** Tasty wrap sandwich. Combine canned chicken or tuna with one cup of cole slaw made with fat-free mayonnaise or dressing. Fill a tortilla wrap with the salad, and add some raisins or pineapple chunks for sweetness.

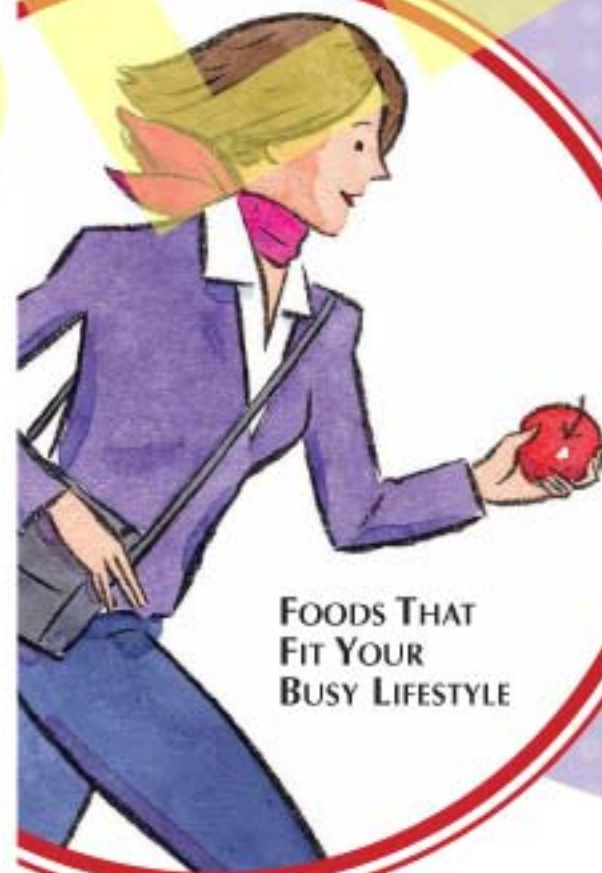
**Snack:** One cup combined of blended corn, diced purple onion, red and green bell pepper and chopped banana peppers (prepared in advance at home) over a half-serving of trans-fat-free restaurant-style corn chips.

**Dinner:** Bean salad. Mix several varieties of low-sodium canned beans (garbanzo, cannellini and black beans are good choices) with diced onion, celery, bell pepper and low-fat vinaigrette dressing. Serve on a bed of lettuce or in a whole-wheat tortilla.

**Dessert:** Bananas and milk, blueberries and cream, frozen yogurt sprinkled with nuts.

**Remember:** Food eaten on the go can be healthy. Your food choices are limited only by your own imagination. No matter how busy you are, treat yourself right — feed yourself well.

# EATING RIGHT ON THE RUN



**FOODS THAT FIT YOUR BUSY LIFESTYLE**

## IT'S A FAST-PACED WORLD

In your fast-paced life, you might make hasty food choices when your stomach is desperate — swallowing anything that looks good, and without regard for fat, sodium and so forth. Or perhaps you overeat when you are stressed. The opposite might also be true ... are you too busy, too tired or too anxious to eat?

No matter how hectic your lifestyle or what kind of eater you are, you probably could benefit from better food choices. Remember, eating isn't just a way to make hunger subside. What you put in your body can affect your energy level; your risk for conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer; and your weight.

Yes, it's a fast-paced world. Fill up on the right foods even when you're on the run.



## Build Healthy Eating Habits

- **Eat slowly** and savor your food.
- **Allow your brain** time to get the message that your stomach is full. This can prevent overeating.

- **Eat consciously.** Put a note on your bathroom mirror, in your car or at your workstation that says, "Think before you eat."
- **Keep a food diary** for a few weeks. Seeing your eating habits in writing can help you make changes.
- **Take one portion** out of the package rather than eating directly from the container.
- **Don't eat mindlessly** in your car or in front of the television.
- **Avoid skipping meals** when you are busy.

## Brown-Bag It!

When you're on the go, you might eat whatever you can grab ... fast. Why not build your own travelin' brown bag packed with healthful food? Whether you're on a trip, commuting, at work, waiting in line, at the gym or picking up the kids, you'll always have something healthy to munch on. **Ideas:**

**Fresh fruit.** Oranges and bananas come in their own convenient wrappers. Or pack cut-up chunks of melon, peach, plum, mango, papaya or pineapple. Many grocery stores sell precut fruit to save you time. Strawberries, blueberries and raspberries are full of vitamins, antioxidants and fiber as well as flavor.

**Fact:** One cup of raspberries has 8 grams of fiber. That's nearly a third of your recommended daily fiber amount. One mango provides your daily allowances of vitamins A and C.

**Cut-up vegetables.** Don't stop at carrot sticks. Try sliced bell peppers, or radishes and grape tomatoes. A variety of textures and colors will add to your enjoyment and nutrition. Add hummus (a dip made from garbanzo beans) for flavor and protein.

**Fact:** Half of a red bell pepper contains almost twice the daily recommended allowance of vitamin C and is high in vitamin A.

**Grains.** Try whole-grain pita bread, tortilla wraps or a grain salad made of couscous. Whole grains provide fiber, fill you up and boost energy.

**Fact:** Fiber helps protect the digestive tract and helps control blood cholesterol levels. Boost your daily fiber intake by making at least half of the grains in your diet "whole" grains.

**Other packables.** Try low-fat string cheese, almonds, raisins, dates, dried figs and apricots, shelled sunflower seeds, whole-grain crackers, turkey pepperoni slices, air-popped popcorn. If it's bite-sized, tasty and good for you, take it along!

**Think portable foods.** Packing your own healthy options can also save time waiting at the drive-through or sandwich counter.



## Did you know?

Cooking vegetables by microwave is fast, and it may preserve more nutrients than other cooking methods.



## Dining Out? Don't Give Up Good Eating

You can carry good eating habits with you to virtually any restaurant. Just be aware of your menu choices, and make smart decisions to maintain your commitment. Eat out without guilt. **Here's how:**

- **Avoid** arriving at the restaurant ravenous — have a light snack before you get there.
- **Have** the restaurant fax a copy of the menu so you can decide on a healthy entrée before you arrive, or check the restaurant's menu online.
- **Make** fun conversation and socializing the center of the meal, instead of the food.
- **Eat** less ... share your entrée with a dining partner.
- **Doing** a buffet? Make a plan before you fill your plate: Fill up on the healthiest choices, and save high-fat items and sweets as treats in small amounts.
- **Have** it your way ... request that the chef hold the cheese, butter or sauces from your order or substitute olive oil and lemon juice for high-fat dressing. Request steamed vegetables instead of sautéed or fried. Ask for sauces and dressing on the side so you control the portion size.
- **Order** an extra serving of veggies with any entrée choice, or request them in place of starches.
- **Stop** eating when you start to feel full.