

## Staying Healthy On the Road:

### Part One: Eating Healthy

Eating healthy is one of the most basic and yet important choices you can make when it comes to your health. In addition to improving your overall physical health, the choice to eat healthy can improve your energy level, your alertness, and even have a positive effect on your mood. Note the word used above...that's right, eating healthy is a **choice**, even when you "live" on the road.

The first step to eating healthy while you're on the road is to keep healthy food in your vehicle that you like and will actually eat. Spend the money on a small refrigerator and microwave that can stay in your truck. You can buy a portable mini refrigerator that comes with an adaptor that allows you to plug it into your vehicle. Having a mini-refrigerator and microwave will help you eat healthy foods and help to maintain a healthy eating schedule. Before you leave on a trip, take the time to make a couple of meals that you can store in serving-sized containers that freeze, stack and reheat easily. Ensure that you always have fresh fruits and vegetables that you've washed, peeled and stored in plastic bags or containers for fast healthy snacks. Plan to eat five to six small meals per day instead of two or three large meals. Eating small meals frequently will help to keep you feeling energized and alert, not lazy and sluggish from a big greasy meal.

As a professional driver, you are constantly faced with deadlines, and it is important to keep those deadlines in mind and be realistic when trying to plan your meals ahead of time. Don't spend the time and money planning extravagant meals that will spoil quickly or taste bad if something comes up and you cannot eat it at the time planned. On the other hand, this doesn't mean that you have to live on tuna or other canned food either. The better your meals are, the less trouble you'll have saying no to the ever-present fast food restaurants. Even if the health benefits alone are not enough to convince you to change your diet at this point, consider the impact that it will have on your wallet. It is important to be aware of the amount of money that you spend at restaurants and buying food in truck stops. The average person could easily spend \$120 per week eating on the road. In comparison, you could spend just half that (\$60) on groceries and prepare meals and snacks ahead of time.

If for some reason you have to stop at a restaurant to eat, choose a restaurant that offers fresh and nutritious options like salads, fresh wraps, and soups. It is important to remember that you should never go without eating and drinking plenty of water. Without food and water, your body will weaken, you will lose energy, and your reflexes can slow, making you much more likely to be involved in an accident.

You and your body deserve and need good food to stay healthy and alert.

#### Tips on a Healthy Diet:

- Take a multi-vitamin daily
- Remember to drink plenty of water (ditch the soda)
- Limit the amount of caffeine per day to 2-3 servings
- Drink your coffee black (ditch the high fat, high cholesterol creamer and sugar)
- Prepare meals ahead of time (i.e. grill fish or chicken to be used in sandwiches and salads, hard boil eggs for snacks)

#### Example of a day's Menu:

- Packet of instant Oatmeal and a piece of fruit
- A hard Boiled Egg and a piece of fruit
- A grilled chicken wrap with fresh veggies (the chicken you grilled at home and packaged)
- Some nuts and dried fruit
- Spaghetti (that you made at home and packaged) and fresh veggies
- Yogurt