

Healthier 'On the Go' Meals & Snacks

Selecting healthier food and drink choices while working 'on the go' can often be a challenge. **Small changes**, such as packing your own stash of healthy snacks can make a **big difference** to your health.



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BILLION

Australians drink 1 billion coffees a year, of which 480 million are cappuccinos.¹



Department of
Health



Healthier 'on the go' meals and snacks

For mobile or 'on the go' workers, where their workplace is 'on the road', keeping healthy can present additional challenges, such as:

- difficulty accessing fresh, healthy food and cool water
- inflated cost of food at roadhouses, lunch bars or cafés
- reduced opportunities to regularly stop and eat
- the ability to store food safely.

To assist 'on the go' workers to eat healthily, consider the following suggestions:

- providing a drink bottle for workers to ensure workers can access water
- offering solutions for safe food storage, such as eskies or chiller bags with ice blocks.

Snack ideas

There are also a range of food and snack ideas widely available, many of which don't require refrigeration. However, some would benefit by being stored in a chiller bag or esky if accessible.

Like all healthy eating recommendations, the key message is to increase fruit and vegetables and to reduce the amount of saturated fat, added sugar and salt consumed.

Many of the snacks recommended come in individual snack packs, which are:

- quick to grab in a hurry;
- easy to store and less prone to spoilage or getting squashed; and
- assist with portion control.

Some of the snacks are also highlighted with an asterisk (*). This means that the snack is a good source of protein. For those workers undertaking long shifts, protein will help one keep fuller for longer while there is some evidence that suggests a high protein meal helps to maintain alertness.

Snacks



Whole pieces of fruit that are easy to clean (apples, oranges, plums, bananas)



Fruit snacks in natural juice (140g snack packs)



Small tins (220g) of salt reduced baked beans* or spaghetti



Fruit snacks in natural juice (140g snack packs)



Breakfast cereal (45g individual serve) with reduced fat long life milk*



Plain, unsalted nuts* (50g snack packs)



Four bean mix snack pack



Rice cakes or corn thins - plain or with a small amount of diet jam



Sandwich - wholegrain bread with no added salt peanut butter or diet jam



Popcorn - plain, sweet or savoury flavours (30g snack packs)



A couple of plain pikelets (bought or home made) with no added salt peanut butter or diet jam



Dried fruit (50g snack packs)

Snacks



Tetra packs of long life plain or flavoured milk*



Tuna and crackers snack packs*



Rice crackers or rice cracker mix (30-50g snack packs)



Fruit varieties of cereal or muesli bars

Pulling over for a bite to eat

For the times when one pulls over to grab a bite, it's still important to consider 'health'. Like any healthy eating recommendation, the key messages are to increase fruit and vegetables and to reduce the amount of saturated fat, added sugar and salt consumed. Good choices include:



if you're feeling like a **burger** - go without the chips, and ask for some salad to be included



if you're feeling thirsty, your best **drink** option is water, followed by 99% fruit juice (go for 250mL varieties if you can) and diet soft drinks



eggs - high protein and full of goodness. Go for poached or boiled where possible



feeling like a **hot meal**? Request it with a side of veggies



stir-fried **noodles** or **fried rice** that contain both meat and vegies are not a bad choice - just watch the portion - they are often huge!



a light bite in the form of a **sandwich, roll or wrap**. Opt for lean processed meat such as ham, skinless chicken or turkey or reduced fat cheese with salad



in a rush? Go for a **smoothie** and ask for it to be made with reduced fat milk and yoghurt



soup is often a great option - an easy way to get some vegies in, as well as being quick to eat



craving some sort of pastry items? If available, go for something not totally encased in pastry - a **Shepard's pie** or a **piece of frittata** are better options than regular pies or quiches



sushi is always a good choice, just avoid the coated and crumbed fillings if possible



not feeling like a full meal? A reduced fat **yoghurt** topped with muesli is quick and nutritious



go for a **salad option** - one with lean protein choices such as tuna, beans or skinless chicken. Make sure it's not smothered in mayo either

The 'drive thru'

For those who are really pressed for time, a quick stop at the drive through may be the only option. Many of the menu items on offer are high in saturated fat, added sugar and salt. There aren't many healthy options available but listed below are a few of the better choices:

- Fruit smoothies
- Fish burgers
- Salads
- Seared or grilled chicken wraps



A word on energy drinks

With pledges of 'vitality', 'invigoration' and 'giving you wings', energy drinks promise a lot!

Energy drinks are a form of soft drink that contain a number of stimulants, vitamins and supplements that are designed to increase stamina, improve physical performance and boost mental alertness and concentration. However, they also contain particularly high levels of caffeine, sugar and other additives and very little is known about their effect on our health.

Recreational consumption of energy drinks has been associated with a number of symptoms including¹ palpitations, tremors, agitation and restlessness and gastrointestinal upset.

Those with a history of heart disease or caffeine sensitivity should also avoid consuming energy drinks due to the high caffeine content.



¹Gunja N, Brown JA. "Energy drinks: health risks and toxicity". Medical Journal of Australia. 2012; 196 (1): 46-49. <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2012/196/1/energy-drinks-health-risks-and-toxicity>