Eating Healthy in a Hurry

When your life is hectic, it’s hard to make eating healthy a priority. If you already have a lengthy to-do list, shopping and cooking in addition to all of your other tasks can seem overwhelming. Making good decisions about food can actually be quite simple and will give you the energy to accomplish those tasks faster and better. A little planning goes a long way to help you avoid going for unhealthy snacks when there’s nothing else available. Here are some simple tips to stay healthy, whatever your schedule.

**DRINK WATER**

It’s so easy to forget this simple habit. Water is a very important nutrient. It helps your body transport vitamins and minerals, support your joints and organs, regulate your temperature and get rid of waste. People often mistake thirst for hunger when what they really need is water.

- Carry a water bottle around with you and refill it throughout the day.
- Add peppermint leaves or sliced fruit to water for extra flavor.
- Satisfy a soda craving with seltzer water instead.

**PLAN AHEAD**

At the beginning of your week cook some meals in bulk so that you don’t need to worry about preparation time later when you’re too tired or busy to make an elaborate meal.

- Bake some chicken breasts and mash or roast some potatoes so you can reheat them for lunch or dinner.
- Cook a large pot of brown rice to add to any meal.
- Hard boil a dozen eggs for part of a quick breakfast or snack.
- Make a chicken or tofu stir fry with plenty of vegetables and freeze it for later.
- Make a 3 bean salad. It can be eaten hot or cold and makes an excellent side dish or main course with rice.
- Buy plenty of fresh fruits so you can grab them on the go.
- Frozen vegetables are quick to prepare, inexpensive, and convenient.
- Keep easy to prepare foods like canned chicken or canned tuna on hand to add protein to a salad or sandwich.
- Use your leftovers wisely: yesterday’s roasted chicken can become today’s chicken salad sandwiches.

**DON’T SKIP BREAKFAST**

Even if you have to hurry from the moment you get out of bed, don’t skip breakfast. This meal prepares you for the day, jumpstarts your metabolism, and keeps you from overeating later.

- Keep fresh or frozen fruits handy. Add peanut butter or a sliced hard-boiled egg to toast for some extra protein.
- Yogurt and granola is quick to prepare and full of protein, heart-healthy fats, and energy.

**CARRY HEALTHY SNACKS**

Pack some healthy snacks for an emergency pick-me-up. This can keep you from eating unhealthy foods out of desperation when you’re suddenly feeling hungry. It is important to watch your snack portion sizes. A good snack has between 150 to 200 calories and has some natural sugars or carbohydrates for energy and either a fat or a protein to keep you satisfied. This is enough to sustain you without ruining your appetite for a full meal later.

- Whole wheat crackers are more filling than chips and easy to pack.
- Peanut butter is a good source of healthy fat and protein and easy to carry with you or stow away in your work space.
- Snack vegetables like baby carrots, celery sticks, sugar snap peas and sliced bell peppers go well with ranch dressing, bean dip, or hummus.
- A handful of nuts and dried fruit or a nutrition bar can quickly satisfy you between meals. Look for a nutrition bar made from ingredients that you recognize and watch out for hidden sugars.

Remember, healthy food choices can be convenient too!

Sources:
- www.mayoclinic.org
- www.eatright.org

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### Healthy In a Hurry Sample Meal Plan

Almost all of these quick and easy snacks and meals can be made in advance and packed for more convenience.

**Breakfast**
- Plain low-fat yogurt
- Frozen blueberries
- Granola
- Tea

**Snack**
- Whole wheat crackers and peanut butter
- Water

**Lunch**
- Tuna or chicken salad on whole wheat bread with lettuce and tomato
- Baby carrots
- Lemon-lime seltzer water

**Snack**
- Apple
- Handful of almonds
- Glass of milk or soy milk

**Dinner**
- Stir-fried chicken and broccoli
- Rice
- Side salad with dressing
- 2 cookies
- Water
Vegetable of the Quarter: Cabbage

For many, cabbage is a dietary staple. It is affordable, incredibly nutritious and available almost everywhere. There are several different varieties, but green and red cabbage are most often found in grocery stores. All cabbages are excellent sources of vitamin C and fiber and, like other members of the Brassica family (kale, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts), contain a number of phytochemicals that have been shown to inhibit the growth of certain cancers.

How to buy it
Cabbage is in season late summer to fall, but it is available year round in grocery stores and it is a great winter ingredient. When purchasing cabbage, look for heavy heads with no signs of dehydration and no black spots.

How to store it
Store cabbage in the refrigerator to retain the vitamin C. Store uncut and unwashed heads in plastics bags for up to two weeks. Once the cabbage has been cut it will keep, wrapped tightly, in the refrigerator for one or two days.

How to cook it
Shredded raw cabbage can be added to salad greens for a nutrient boost and can also be used on top of tacos or sandwiches. For a healthy cabbage slaw, toss shredded raw red and green cabbage with grated carrots, oil, vinegar, herbs, and spices. Whole cabbage leaves can also be stuffed and baked or sliced and added to soups and stews like the one here.

Sources: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov, www.simplesteps.org

Cabbage and White Bean Soup

Serves 8-10

Ingredients:
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
12 ounces fully cooked chicken sausages, thinly sliced (about 4 sausages) (optional)
4 cups thinly sliced green cabbage (about 1/2 small head)
3 cups thinly sliced leeks (about 3 stalks, white and pale-green parts only)
2 cups baby carrots, sliced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
8 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 15-ounce can cannellini (white kidney beans), rinsed and drained

Directions:
Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in large pot over med-high heat. Add sausage slices and sauté until brown around edges, about 5 minutes. Add cabbage; sauté 2 minutes. Transfer to bowl. Add remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil to same pot and heat over med heat. Add leeks and carrots and sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Add tomato paste, parsley, and rosemary and stir 1 minute. Add broth, sausage-cabbage mixture, and beans and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 40 minutes.

Recipe adapted from www.epicurious.com

Peppermint (Mentha piperita) is one of the most widely consumed herbs. The leaves are commonly used fresh or dried in teas, but it can also be purchased as an essential oil or in capsule form. Peppermint has long been used medicinally to treat a variety of conditions, ranging from treatment of gastrointestinal problems to pain and migraines.

Peppermint Tea

This recipe is especially helpful to ease an upset stomach. The peppermint leaves are good on their own, but if you want to jazz it up, try this out!

Ingredients

◊ 1 1/2 inches of fresh ginger root, sliced
◊ 2 tbsp fresh peppermint leaves

Directions
Boil water. Place Ginger Root and Peppermint leaves in the water once it has reached a boil. Remove from heat. Let the tea steep for 3 - 4 minutes and strain.