

Driving and your health - Think about it!



Tool Box Talk No.6 Facilitator's Notes

Healthy Food Choices - fuel for the journey

A. OVERVIEW

This briefing covers important information about healthy food choices including:

- how a balanced diet can reduce the risk of lifestyle-related diseases, improve overall health and wellbeing and give drivers “staying power” on the road; and
- tips on how commercial vehicle drivers can make healthy food choices.

B. DURATION

10 - 20 minutes

C. KEY MESSAGES

1. Eat right and you can reduce your risk of developing lifestyle-related diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.
2. Eat right and you can also increase your “staying power” on the road - keeping you alert and keeping you safe.
3. Watching your weight is important for staying well in the long term.
4. You can make healthier food choices when you're on the road.
5. No one's perfect and perfect is no fun! Try to eat right on most days so that you can look forward to treating yourself.
6. Get organised – stock up your cab with healthy snack food and save money too.
7. What you drink is also important – opt for water and avoid expensive fizzy drinks.
8. For more information about how to improve your diet or lose weight, speak to your doctor, dietitian or nutritionalist or contact Nutrition Australia.



D. HANDOUTS AND RESOURCES

- FACT SHEET – *Healthy Food Choices – fuel for the journey*.
- Power Point presentation.
- Other resources – brochures and posters may be resourced through the health organisations listed on the NTC website (Useful Contacts section).





1. Why eat right?

Eating right may be challenging when you're on the road, but it's well worth the effort.

- **You'll feel better** – with more energy and vitality to stay alert on the road and get more out of life.
- **You'll look better** – a healthy diet helps you to better manage your weight and is essential for healthy looking skin, hair and teeth.
- **You'll last longer** – a healthy diet will reduce your chances of developing lifestyle diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer which can all cause early death and disability, and can keep you off the road.

Think of your body as a vehicle that requires good quality fuel to keep it functioning at its best!

Do you need to lose weight?

Around 74% of commercial drivers are overweight or obese compared to 63% of the rest of the population. Men are prone to putting on weight around the stomach (abdominal area), which places them at a greater risk of developing lifestyle-related diseases such as heart disease. A small weight loss from around the middle can significantly improve your health. Speak to your doctor, dietitian or nutritionist if you need to lose weight.

2. Healthy food choices on the road



Question for participants:

What sort of food do you eat when you're on the road?

As a commercial driver you may be on the road for long periods of time. Chances are you eat at truck stops and takeaway outlets so your food choices might be limited. But it is possible to make healthier choices once you know what to ask for.

Let's look at a typical day on the road and see what healthier alternatives might be available.

Healthier alternatives are those with:

- less fat (particularly less saturated fat e.g. high fat red meats, salami and other processed meats, biscuits, cakes, etc);
- less sugar; and
- more fibre,

A healthier diet means:

- more fruit and veg;
- more wholegrain breads and cereals;
- moderate amounts of LEAN meat;
- at least a couple of serves of fish per week;
- moderate amounts of low fat dairy products;
- less cakes, biscuits; and
- less sugary carbonated drinks and plenty of water.

As you'll see:



- You don't have to go without.
- If you make healthier choices you can EAT MORE! and
- Small changes can make a BIG DIFFERENCE.

There are plenty of alternatives. And remember if you can't see what you're after, ***just ask for it.***



Aim for 2-3 serves of fruit per day and at least 5 different sorts of vegetables.

SMALL CHANGES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

MEAL	Try these... 	Fat count	Instead of these... 	Fat count
Breakfast	Baked beans on multigrain toast Fruit juice Coffee with low-fat milk and 1 sugar	7g	Egg and bacon muffin Coffee with full cream milk and 2 sugars	21g
Morning tea	Banana and apple Muesli bar Water	14g	Jam and cream-filled donut Soft drink	19g
Lunch	2 x cheese, lean meat and salad rolls Handful of dried fruit and nuts Low fat flavoured milk	38g	2 Meat Pies Chocolate thick shake	68g
Snack	Soup and toast or crackers with yeast extract spread Piece of fruit Coffee with low-fat milk and 1 sugar	5g	Bucket of hot chips Soft drink	23g
Dinner	Grilled lean steak with vegetables or salad Wholemeal roll with poly or monounsaturated margarine Low-fat yoghurt, beer	16g	Sausages, gravy and chips Cheesecake Beer	65g
	Total fat content	80g	Total fat content	196g

* For good health, it is recommended that your fat intake makes up no more than 30% of your daily energy intake or approximately 50 – 70g of fat per day.

3. Get organised

Grazing throughout the day is important for maintaining your energy levels and keeping you alert on the road. Healthy snacking is just a matter of getting organised. Prepare your snacks on the weekend for the week ahead. Aim for snacks that are **LOW IN FAT, LOW IN SUGAR** and **HIGH IN FIBRE**, to keep you going for longer. You'll not only feel better, you'll also save money.

Quick healthy snack ideas and money savers (\$) for the road:

- Buy dried fruit and nuts in bulk and package up in containers to keep in the cab.
- Low-fat muesli bars, low fat dry biscuits and low fat rice snacks are also good options and can be bought at the supermarket to save \$s.
- Buy a selection of boxed fruit juice, long life low fat milk drinks and water and keep them in a cool box – water is the best choice but variety is important too.
- Fresh fruit will also keep well in a cool place – snack on apples, bananas, mandarins or whatever you fancy.

4. Try the 5-day rule

Eating right doesn't mean starving yourself or snacking on rabbit food, nor does it mean that you have to go without your tub of hot chips altogether! Try to eat a healthy, balanced diet 5 days per week so that on the weekend, if you choose to treat yourself, that's ok.

5. Drink right



Did you know that most commercial drivers spend more than \$5 per day on soft drink – that's over \$1500 per year? Imagine what else you could spend that money on! Soft drink (sugar) also does a poor job of quenching your thirst.

- **Water** is the best choice to keep you hydrated and alert. Aim for 2 litres per day - more if it's hot. Hard to achieve? Have a glass when you get up, 1 or 2 with every meal and one before you go to bed. And keep a water bottle or two in the cab.
- Other good choices include diet soft drinks, weak tea, herbal teas, and low-fat milk. Fruit juice is also OK but limit to a couple of glasses per day as even the "natural" juices are high in sugar.
- Limit drinks high in caffeine such as coffee and cola. These will give you a kick-start in the short term but will leave you feeling tired and lethargic later. Aim to limit tea and coffee to around 5 cups per day.
- Watch your alcohol too. A beer after a long day on the road is fine but try to limit it to 2 standard drinks per day.



6. For more information

Contact:

- Your local doctor, dietitian or nutritionist.
- Heart Foundation – Heart line: 1300 36 27 87.
- Nutrition Australia in your state or territory www.nutritionaustralia.org.
- Diabetes Australia Helpline: 1300 13 65 88.

This resource has been developed with input from Nutrition Australia



For more information see www.ntc.gov.au

Looking after your health is like looking after your vehicle - regular care and maintenance pays off in the long run

The Driving and Your Health Campaign is proudly supported by:

