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Planning is key to eating well on the go

Freelance writer Irene Gentle looks at eating wisely from various perspectives in the following stories, the second installment of a two-part feature presented during March, which is Nutrition Month

By IRENE GENTLE
Special to the Champion

When it comes to nutrition, how to keep going when you're on the run has become one of the most-asked questions.

With lifestyles getting busier, it can be hard to find the time to eat at all, never mind well. Still, it can be done. All it takes is a little pre-planning.

That just means prioritizing. Take a little time out of your busy schedule to think ahead and healthy eating can be easier than you imagined.

To start, though, forget all your old notions of fast food being fried food. Today eating on the run doesn't have to slow down your quest for health. All you have to do is make smarter choices.

"The perception is that it's not healthy to eat on the road but it's possible," reports Jessica MacKay of the Halton Regional Health Department. "There are healthy choices at fast food restaurants."

In response to consumer demand, more and more fast food restaurants are offering healthier, lower fat fare such as wraps (tortilla shells wrapped around vegetables or chicken) or pita sandwiches. Select submarine sandwiches bursting with veggies or filled with lower fat meats such as turkey. Skip nutrient-slim but calorie-dense sauces like mayonnaise, forgo the extra cheese and you're ahead of the game.

If you feel like a treat and the fast food burger is calling your name, go for it, but choose your sides wisely. Grab a glass of milk to add calcium to your meal, or skip the fries and get a salad instead. And despite how good a deal it seems, skip the biggie portions. The odds are you'll eat more than you want no matter how good your intentions are.

The healthiest eating of all starts simply — with a well-stocked refrigerator and cupboard.

Always keep your kitchen filled with good things to eat and nutrition on the go can be as simple as packing extra fruit to go along with lunch. Slice up celery and carrot sticks for vegetables on the run. Add some peanut butter for extra taste and protein. Whole-grain bread at home can easily be translated into quickie sandwiches.

Ensuring there are always healthy snacks on hand means no more starving on the way to making dinner, even if you're working late and your kid stayed after school for basketball practice.

"Serve part of dinner before dinner. I might peel some carrots to munch on while we're waiting for dinner so we're not absolutely starving. That can help keep the appetite from getting

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Busy advertising rep Marilyn Bosnjak catches a quick yet nutritious meal on the go. More and more fast food restaurants are offering healthy alternatives these days.

Healthy eating highly important for the senior citizens of today

By IRENE GENTLE
Special to the Champion

When it comes to helping a senior stay healthy longer, the best thing you can offer is your time.

The bottom line is when dealing with nutrition, old age is not for slackers. While a sound nutritional base can be the foundation for a healthy old age, the golden years are actually critical when it comes to keeping a strict nutritional watch.

A number of things conspire to make eating less interesting for seniors. One of the biggest factors in the lost-appetite syndrome common to the elderly is simply being alone.

The fact is a senior who lives on his or her own is just less likely to be interested in cooking or eating.

"There may be a loss of interest in eating coupled with the loss of a spouse, or having family far away.

"There seems to be little interest in cooking for themselves," said Jessica MacKay of the Halton Regional Health Department. "The lack of encouragement to eat can be a huge issue. The living alone aspect can be a big issue."

That's because while we tend to think of eating as primarily physical, it is also a very social thing. Take away the company and watch how fast food loses its taste.

That can pit even the healthiest senior against a vicious circle where lack of interest in food degenerates into being too depleted and tired to eat.

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