

EMS Safety Bulletin: Healthy Eating and Nutrition

As medical professionals, we know the staples of good nutrition and have a general knowledge of what we should be putting into our body. Even so, we don't always take the time to make a nutritional meal and often find ourselves grabbing something on the "go", between patients and emergency incidents. The best way to make sure you know what you are putting into your body is to make it yourself. Prior to your next shift, try packing your meals, include snacks, beverages, and a few extras so when you find yourself working harder or longer, you still have a few items for that pick me up to get you through.

General Tips:

- Remember that just about everything is attached to a calorie count. Pay attention, you may be astonished with the calorie/serving ratio, especially when it comes to favorite snacks.
- Water is king. Carry a refillable water bottle, which can be refilled wherever you make a stop and it is better for the environment. There are no calories in water and it will help keep that full feeling and can reduce the desire to snack. For flavor, add fresh fruit, something as simple as a lemon, lime, or orange slices.
- With soda or fruit juice, pay attention to the calories per serving. Diet sodas have little to no calories; however, they often contain other ingredients that may not be desirable.

Tips for Meals:

- Generally eggs, or egg whites, are a great fuel to start the day, but avoid frying or mixing in cheeses.
- Chicken and fish are versatile foods when it comes to lean protein, and for energy that is the goal. It can be prepared in many ways but be careful with adding flavors, look at the labels and check calories to be sure to know what you are putting in your body.
- Much like marinades and spices, condiments (such as ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing) have calories. Look up your favorite restaurant's salad calorie content, you may be amazed that "eating healthy" can have you adding more weight than a chicken sandwich. When choosing a salad – get the dressing on the side and dip your fork in the dressing before collecting your bite of salad, also consider eliminating cheeses, croutons & bacon bits.

Tips for In-Between Meals:

- Most snack foods are very satisfying to the taste buds, easy on the wallet, and hard on the calorie count and waistline. Choose protein bars, fresh fruits, nuts, or yogurt, but watch the labels on the protein bars; generally look for bars below 180 calories with at least 10 grams of protein. Try unsalted sunflower seeds or cashews and peanuts as a quick snack and have a small handful during downtimes or try yogurt with fresh fruit or granola.

There is no magic answer. Look at each label and think of each calorie as a charge on your credit card. Every time you use that card you know you will have to pay the bill. To pay this bill you need more time dedicated to the gym, treadmill, pool or bicycle.

