

5 Fast Ways to Eat Heart-Healthy Today!

Life on the road means lots of hours behind the wheel. It can also mean way too many high-fat, high-calorie truck stop and diner meals. And sadly, all those calories come at a cost. Studies show that 7 in 10 truck drivers are overweight, which raises their risk for serious heart disease.

Yet it doesn't have to be this way. Drivers can lower their risk for heart disease—and improve the quality of their life—by making a few simple choices each day. Let's look at five ways to still satisfy your hunger and keep your heart beating strong.

- 1. Eat smaller meals more often.** Don't load all your calories into one big evening meal. Instead, spread out your meals. Eating three smaller meals and two or three snacks a day will help you in several ways. For one, it will keep you feeling full. For another, it will help your body regulate its blood sugar levels. That will reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes, which leads to obesity and higher risks of heart disease. It will also keep you alert for your entire shift.

2. Balance your meals. For breakfast, try yogurt, hardboiled eggs, oatmeal, whole-grain breads or fresh fruit like berries. For lunch and dinner, heart-healthier items include chicken, turkey, tuna, lean ground beef, beans or rice. A salad is always a wise choice, as long as you go easy on dressings that contain high levels of sugar or fat. Keeping a mini-fridge, small slow cooker or microwave in your truck can help you make your own healthier meals.

3. Reach for water. Swapping sugary soft drinks for water is sometimes the fastest way to lose weight and reduce the strain on your heart. Water may help improve your digestion and make you feel full faster, so you don't eat too much.



4. Pack your snacks. If you select your own snacks, you'll reduce your cravings for diner food or unhealthy grab-and-go items like king size candy bars, chips or doughnuts. Some smart snack choices:

- A small veggie and cheese tray with carrots, broccoli or peppers
- Celery or apple slices with peanut butter
- Fresh fruits like oranges, bananas, pears or raisins
- Almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans or walnuts
- Protein bars or energy bars
- Low-fat string cheese

5. Don't make truck stop meals a regular habit.

They're OK every once and a while, but not every morning and night. When eating at a truck stop, avoid deep-fried foods like onion rings and chicken fingers. Load up half your plate with green vegetables. And steer clear of the specials—many of them come with loads of calories.