When eating away from home, planning may be the most important action a person can take. When stressed or rushed, many revert to familiar habits. If those habits are not healthy ones, poor choices can be made. Habits may include grabbing high fat donuts, stopping at convenient fast food restaurants, eating larger portions, or making afternoon visits to the vending machine because there isn’t anything healthy within reach.

pack a meal: Planning ahead provides a variety of healthy food choices and portion sizes that are satisfying. Eating well also serves as a subtle role model for the workplace culture that focuses on less than healthful eating and celebrations. With a little thought, anyone can plan a meal-on-the-go that best fits any situation. Use these as inspiration:

- Whole wheat bagel, low-fat cheese, pear, water
- Fresh spinach, crumbled feta cheese and cubed chicken (left over from last night’s dinner) in a whole wheat pita, grapes, skim milk
- Broth-based soup (pass on the cream soups), baked wheat crackers, apple
- Sliced turkey with low-fat dressing (skip the high-fat mayo) wrapped in a lettuce leaf, baked chips, fresh berries, iced tea

TAKE ALONG FOOD

fresh fruits: Select apples, pears, grapes, berries

dried fruits: Pack figs, prunes, dates, apricots, raisins

yogurt: Choose plain yogurt and add fruit. Blend yogurt with frozen fruit for smoothies-to-go. Make a parfait by layering fresh berries, granola and yogurt. Delicious!

cheese: Carry along part-skim mozzarella sticks or cubed low-fat cheese

veggies: Bag up baby carrots, celery sticks, pepper strips, grape or cherry tomatoes, sugar snap peas, cold cooked sweet potato wedges, crisp cucumber slices or sticks.

dips: Try hummus, salsa, or cottage cheese mixed with herbs or spices

bread: Keep it whole grain. The first ingredient on the label should include ‘whole’, i.e. whole wheat, whole corn, etc. Try whole wheat tortillas for wraps or pita bread for pocket salads. These are easy to take along on the road.

meats: Choose lean cuts like sliced, oven-roasted turkey or chicken. Processed or smoked lunch meats may be high in fat, sodium, or nitrates. Peanut butter is a great choice. If you make PB & J, pair it with fresh fruit spread.

drinks: Drink water, meal replacement shakes, 100% juice, skim milk, or teas.

snacks: Bring baked whole grain crackers, pretzels, rice or popcorn cakes, low fat microwave popcorn, baked chips, unsalted, dry roasted nuts, mini boxes or small bags of whole grain cereals.