



NEWS RELEASE

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Avoid nutritional disasters while traveling

*By Chris Halagarda,
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FORT LEE, Va. – Traveling is one of the biggest nutrition barriers I hear about from clients – especially with active-duty military members who always seem to be on the go. While it’s true that eating healthy while traveling offers unique challenges, it doesn’t have to be a nutritional disaster. Some simple steps of planning and adjusting can lead to creating a healthier environment than when you’re at home!

- **Call ahead:** Always call your hotel in advance to see what appliances they offer in the room. Most military installations have guest lodging facilities that are equipped are equipped with small refrigerators, microwaves and coffee pots. Some of the rooms even have stove tops. There’s no excuse for eating poorly there! Some hotels will also place a microwave or refrigerator in the room upon request, but be sure to ask if there’s a fee associated with the added appliance.
- **Bring breakfast:** Unless you are going to have “eating meetings” every day, be sure to bring your own breakfast. I don’t leave home without a bag of oatmeal and a jar of natural peanut butter. Make sure to pack it in your checked luggage as airport security can confiscate your peanut butter. I’ve learned this the hard way.

If your room doesn’t have a microwave, simply run hot water through the coffee pot to mix with your oatmeal. And, don’t forget a spoon. I leave a spoon and fork in my luggage. I’ve learned this the hard way, too.

- **Stash healthy snacks:** Always get into a habit of bringing healthy snacks in your carry-on luggage. It prevents poor choices at the airport and on the plane. If you have extra space in your check-in luggage, try to bring extra snacks such as granola, granola bars and plenty of fruit. A box of healthy cereal is helpful, too. These snacks are great for hungry times in your room, but also for midmorning and afternoon snacks when you are not at an eating meeting.

Of course, to have a bowl of cereal you'll have to stop by the commissary for a jug of milk. Milk is also a great pre- and post-exercise beverage. The combination of casein and whey protein helps to repair muscles and the lactose begins to replace glycogen. If you worked out real hard or long, have some cereal with your milk to add more carbohydrate for refueling.

- **Water:** Many people don't like to drink tap water, especially while traveling. If this is the case, buying jugs of water at the commissary to refill a water bottle you traveled with is a greener and more cost-efficient way to go than buying individual bottles. This is especially true if you are very active and need a lot of fluids.

- **Meals on demand:** For those nights that you're not obligated to eat out, it's a great idea to eat in your room. Who said a bowl of granola and milk is only a breakfast food. Some microwavable TV dinners have come a long way, too. With less sodium and saturated fat and more vegetables and whole grains in some brands than ever before, these choices are often better than eating out. A simple commissary trip can also set you up with all the fixings needed for a great salad or sandwich.

If going out to eat is inevitable, whether it's to schmooze or celebrate, try to choose your entree wisely and ask for substitutions if you would like a healthier side option. Fish is always a great choice while on the road. Americans don't eat enough fish and as a result, we miss out on all the benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids. Just be sure to ask for the sauce on the side. Most of the time, the sauce lowers the nutrient quality of the meal. Substitutions to ask for are a side salad with dressing on the side, fresh fruit, steamed vegetables or whole-grain rice.

Certainly, traveling for work or on vacation offers challenges, but with some easy planning and simple questions to the waiter at the dinner table, you'll be on your way to a healthy trip.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA

Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

-DeCA-

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth more than \$4,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*