



# Road Trip: Fueling Up for Success

By Dana Lis, B.Sc. RD

The traveling athlete faces many scheduling challenges to their training programs. Inexperienced travelers or athletes who have minimal knowledge of their dietary requirements may end up impeding their performance through poor nutrition planning and decision-making. It is a given that not every team or athlete has access to a registered dietitian specialized in sport nutrition to help prepare them for travel. As a coach you can be a nutrition advocate and set your athletes up for success on the road. Whether a world away or only a few hours from home, proper nutrition planning can ensure that athletes have the potential to perform at

their best. Follow these ten simple steps to prepare athletes for winning travel nutrition planning whether traveling by car, air or rail.

Take these tips to your teams and hit the road planned and prepared for nutrition success. A registered dietitian who specializes in sport can give your athletes the nutritional competitive edge by providing individualized travel nutrition plans which are specific to the sport, climate, athletes, schedule and food availability. To connect with a sport dietitian, or to find more information on fueling for sport, visit [www.sportmedbc.com](http://www.sportmedbc.com).

## 1 PLAN FOR TRAVEL TIME

Plan to pack enough high carbohydrate, moderate protein snacks and fluids for the duration of your travel time. To stay hydrated, drink at least one cup of water for every hour of travel, especially on airplanes where the air is continuously recycled. Pack a personal snack pack with easy to carry, security-approved snacks like:

- Trail mix
- Granola bars
- Beef jerky
- Instant oatmeal packets
- Dried fruit
- Sandwiches
- Powdered sport drink
- Empty water bottles – to be filled on board the airplane

## 2 STAND UP TO JET LAG

Time changes can wreck havoc on sleeping, eating and bathroom routines. To minimize disruption set watches to the destination time. Try to get athletes to sleep and organize their nutrition regimes in accordance with the new time. If possible organize travel to maximize the opportunity for normal sleeping routines. A high carb snack before they sleep can also help minimize insomnia. Natural daylight,

avoiding long naps and light activity can help to adapt to time changes. Some light morning exercise is just the thing!

## 3 FROM HOT TO COLD OR LOW TO HIGH - PLAN TO ACCLIMATIZE

Athletes should be prepared for increased sweat rates and fluid needs when traveling to different climates. They should increase fluid intake and replace sodium losses with a sports drink and dietary salt intake. Ensure athletes do not lose more than 2% of their body weight during exercise by encouraging fluid intake and ensuring fluids are readily available. Sports drinks and lightly salting foods can help to replace sodium losses in hot environments. Travel nutrition packs should contain powdered sport drink and extra salt packets or electrolyte supplements. In addition, leave adequate time for individuals to adjust to performing under these new conditions.

## 4 DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT THEM

Whether it is peanut butter or a special energy bar, pack plenty of comfort foods, tailored to the individual preferences of each of the athletes. These are important psychologically and will also help athletes

stick with the nutrition plan before, after and during physical activity.

## 5 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Find out what amenities are available in and around the hotel you will be staying at and at the event venue. Some key things to research:

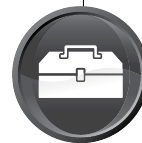
- Continental breakfast
- Room fridges
- Nearby grocery stores and restaurants
- Local cuisine

## 6 SAVE THE POUTINE (THE QUEBEC DELICACY) FOR AFTER THE EVENT

Regional cuisine should not be passed up. However, save the high fat and unfamiliar foods or drinks for victory celebrations. Encourage athletes to stick with their regular nutrition regimes and foods. Make time for athletes to experience the famed local foods after competition.

## 7 HUNT DOWN THE CARBS

Go for low-fat, high-carb on the road. Starchy vegetables, whole grains, fruits should be key ingredients on daily menus. Encourage athletes to stock up on carbs by choosing



starchy vegetables and beans at the salad bar as well as filling half of their meal plate with whole grain breads, cereals, pasta or rice. Adding a serving of dairy can also pack an extra carb and protein punch.

## ⑧ BE A RESTAURANT CRITIC

Finding a non “burger joint” restaurant in small town Saskatchewan is not easy. A few phone calls and some advanced research can solve this problem. Make a list of healthier restaurants and grocery shopping outlets. Instruct athletes to make menu selections that are jam-packed with whole grains, fruits, vegetable and lean proteins. A sport dietitian is your best resource for teaching these skills, but as a coach, you can get the ball rolling.

## ⑨ CREATURES OF HABIT

For many athletes it is critical, both physiologically and psychologically, to stick to pre/post event nutrition habits. Instruct athletes to pack foods they cannot live without, and to stick to their usually nutrition timing habits as closely as possible.

## ⑩ DON'T BE A TRAVELERS DIARRHEA STATISTIC

As many as 60% of athletes who travel internationally get some form of

gastrointestinal illness - not what you need prior to competing. Researching water quality and food safety standards ahead of time can help your team decide what precautions to take. Some tips:

- Make sure cold foods are cold and hot foods hot. Items that have been left standing for too long can cause problems the next day.
- Wash hands frequently with soap for at least 30 seconds, especially before eating, and have hand sanitizer available.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk, unpeeled fruits and vegetables, shellfish, and raw fish.
- Stick to bottled water and pass on ice cubes, raw foods washed in tap water (e.g., salads, fruits, and vegetables). Don't forget the bottled water when brushing teeth.
- Taking a probiotic supplement may help in preventing the pathogenic ones.

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individualized travel nutrition plans which are specific to the sport, climate, athletes, schedule and food availability. To connect with a sport dietitian, or to find more information on fueling for sport, visit [www.sportmedbc.com](http://www.sportmedbc.com).

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CLIPBOARD; Spectra Energy... - Cont'd from page 4

“In the sporting world, having a company like Spectra Energy, actually seeking out athletes to support and alleviating the financial burden that comes with pursuing their big dreams, is almost unheard of.”

Athletes at the recent launch of TEAM Spectra took the time to talk about the importance of coaches to athletes, and in particular, some of the coaches that have influenced their lives.

Denny Morrison paid tribute to his coach Marcel Lacroix who he has been training with for six years. “Training me, inspiring me, basically persuading me to become as good of a skater as I am today - I owe a lot to him. Marcel has given me the determination and the motivation to become part of TEAM Spectra.” Jay Morrison added, “He’s a great motivator. He runs a great program. He has great technical advice.”

Beckie Scott, TEAM Spectra athlete ambassador and keynote speaker at the launch of British Columbia Coaches Week in Richmond on September 20 said, “Coaches are one of the biggest parts of the puzzle and one of the biggest pieces in the overall life of an athlete. To have a great coach from beginning to end is really important.”

