



UNITED DAIRY INDUSTRY OF MICHIGAN

Staying Healthy on the Campaign Trail

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Frequent snacking, lack of exercise and splurging on favorite foods are three of the top five reasons Americans are unsuccessful when it comes to managing their weight – and the presidential candidates’ struggles are no different. Hillary Clinton’s secret food indulgence is chocolate ice cream, while Barack Obama craves French fries and John McCain enjoys sugared doughnuts. Whether you’re on the campaign trail, a business trip or a family vacation, eating healthful foods on the go can be difficult. However, with a little planning, travelers can learn from the candidates to prevent lugging extra pounds back from a trip.

Unhealthy eating can begin at takeoff, with the average airline meal weighing in at 1,054 calories – not including calories consumed with sugar-filled sodas – and ordinary travelers aren’t the only ones indulging. While campaigning in 2004, Senator John Edwards was known for drinking 10 to 12 cans of diet soda each day. According to a new study from the University of Minnesota, researchers found a correlation between drinking diet soda and an increased risk for metabolic syndrome - a collection of diseases that include obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease. Stay healthy by following recommendations from The American Dietetic Association, including drinking 100 percent juice, low fat milk or water to avoid dehydration and aggravated jet lag symptoms. Pack your own nutrient-rich snacks, like dry fruit, string cheese, whey protein bars and whole grain crackers in a carry-on bag for an energy boost.

If your travel plans call for transportation by car, follow the National Diabetes Education Program’s advice and pack a snack survival kit – just like Senator Clinton. She earmarks memory-boosting snacks like grapes, nuts and apples to keep her on track. If you’re pressed for time and rely on drive-through dining, it doesn’t have to be a roadblock to healthy eating. Many restaurants now offer small portions and post nutrition information on the menu to help customers make healthy selections. Healthy bets for dashboard dining include:

- A grilled chicken sandwich or kid-sized burger but hold the mayo. A tablespoon of mayonnaise has almost 100 calories. Try mustard, lettuce and tomato instead.
- Low fat milk – plain or flavored – or water instead of soda. Some people may hesitate to choose flavored milk because of its sugar content, but a new study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* shows people who drink flavored milk have better overall nutrition and weigh less than those who do not drink milk.
- Substituting a side salad, baked potato or fruit cup – for fries.
- Ordering a salad with dressings and condiments on the side – and use them sparingly.

If you've splurged on unhealthy eating choices while traveling, make a comeback and win with nutrient-rich foods. Americans are overweight yet undernourished, and need to get more nutritional value from the foods and beverages they eat and drink. Choose vibrant colored fruits and vegetables, 100 percent whole grain breads, crackers and cereals, and lean meat like chicken or fish to "power up your plate" with more vitamins and minerals per calorie. Additionally, don't forget to "vote dairy" and incorporate low fat milk, cheese or yogurt into your diet for big returns. Each serving of dairy provides a unique package of nine key vitamins and minerals that helps build strong bones and teeth. Unfortunately, research shows that Americans are getting only half of the recommended three daily servings of dairy. Drinkable yogurt, string cheese and milk chugs are pre-portioned, portable options that make snacking-on-the-go simple.

Coupled with healthy eating, there's no debate that Americans should endorse exercise to ensure weight maintenance. Whether you're a mindless snacker or often indulge in less-than-wholesome foods, get back on track by enjoying 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity each day, as recommended by the National Diabetes Education Program. Take advantage of your surroundings when traveling, and use local nature trails, hotel pools and exercise facilities – or simply pack a jump rope. Senator Obama stays lean by shooting hoops with future voters when he's traveling from city to city.

This campaign season, follow a healthy diet and exercise program to stay healthy wherever your travels take you. Voters and candidates alike can "win the race" with everyday activity and nutrient-rich foods. Visit the United Dairy Industry of Michigan online at www.udim.org and www.3aday.org for more tips on keeping a healthy agenda when away from home.