

# Safety Bulletin

## Firefighter Nutrition Webinar Summary

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### Firefighter Nutrition Webinar Summary

(Notes taken by Eric Marsh)



The following information was provided by the International Association of Firefighters nutritional experts during a Firefighter Nutrition Webinar.

Presentations on health and nutrition can be challenging. Everyone has different goals; whether it's losing weight, maintaining weight, bulking up, cutting sugars, cutting sodium, or any number of other personal goals. This webinar identified reasons why we should be considerate of our nutritional goals, briefly covered what we should eat to make our meals healthier, and covered some things we should avoid when it comes to eating healthy. The following bullets outline a brief overview of what was presented.

- **Things to keep in mind when eating**

- What do we need vs what do we want
- Average person's daily diet consists of more than 60% of their calories being obtained from highly processed and low quality foods.

- **Reasons we should eat healthy foods**

- Health risks associates with our job
  - Toxins / IDLH atmospheres
  - Stressful calls and events
  - Interrupted sleep
  - Cultural norms when it comes to meals
- Overexertion, medical issues, and stress cause the majority firefighter deaths (54%) resulting in cardiac arrest in most cases (<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/Emergency-responders/osFFF.pdf>)
  - Eating healthier and being in shape can help prevent this

- **Fundamentals of the majority of popular nutrition plans include**

- Eating whole foods
- Consuming quality proteins
- Incorporating veggies
- Prioritizing nutrition
- Minimizing processed foods
- Eating slowly

- **What are we supposed to eat?**

- Protein
  - 1-2 Palm sized servings
  - Wild game, bison, beef, poultry, etc.
  - Keep in mind the fat content of the meat. Leaner meat is better
  - Protein is what will keep you feeling full
- Vegetables
  - 1-2 Fists full
  - Add color to your meals
  - Cook them rather than having them raw. Make them taste good
- Healthy fats
  - 1 Thumb sized serving
  - Oils, egg yolks, nuts and seeds, cheese, dairy, cold water fish
  - Our bodies need healthy fats containing fatty acids that our bodies cannot produce on its own in order to absorb vitamins.
  - Avoid
    - Trans fat and hydrogenated oils
- Carbohydrates
  - 1-2 cupped handfuls serving size
  - Root vegetables, beans, fruits, potatoes, rice, pasta, breads
  - Carbs are the bodies main source of energy

- **Challenges and things to keep in mind**

- Staying healthy while at work and off work
  - Sometimes people are great at eating healthy while they're off work but once they get to work their healthy habits go out the window or vice-versa
    - Plan ahead and have healthy snacks available
    - This is usually when people fall short of their nutrition plans because they grab something quick and easy rather than being prepared and having a healthy alternative
  - Practice health eating habits
    - Slow down and enjoy your meals
    - Pay attention to the tastes and benefits of the foods consumed
    - Focus on being satisfied and not stuffed
  - Avoid extreme dieting practices
    - Diets with absolutely no fats or no carbs
  - Ditch the guilt when you don't follow through with your diet
  - Celebrate small wins.

\*\*\*\*Check out <https://www.iaff.org/nutrition/> for more resources and information about firefighter nutrition and eating for your goals!\*\*\*\*

If you would like to discuss your personal nutrition or fitness goals, please reach out to Technician Landman.

Questions regarding this safety bulletin should be directed to Technician Landman.