



## Eat for the Heat

Working outside during the heat of summer can make eating unpleasant. Certain foods tend to make people feel exhausted and sluggish when it's warm outside. Fueling up on proper foods can help the situation. Here are some foods to consider when working outside in the summer heat.

**Fruits and vegetables** that have high water content will help you stay hydrated during the hotter days while you are working outside and sweating. Many fruits and vegetables such as watermelon and cucumbers have high water content and will help in keeping you hydrated and not feeling run down from eating "heavy" foods.

**Foods that are high in potassium**, a mineral important in muscle function. When the body is low on potassium, the body's muscles will cramp, especially if dehydrated. Some high-potassium foods include bananas, almonds, and spinach.

**Salty Foods- in moderation** - such as olives and pickles are a good way to obtain energy for those who are active during the warmer months. Athletes use salty foods for energy, so they are a proven way to beat the heat. Salt is made of sodium, which we lose while sweating in hot conditions. Eating salty foods helps us to replenish the sodium lost through sweat. Too much salty food can make you feel bloated, or increase your risk of elevated blood pressure, so moderation is important.

How you eat for the heat should not stop when the workday is finished, nor should it only start once you get to work. If you aren't able to stay hydrated entirely through the workday, you need to plan your evening meals to help you recover. Staying dehydrated overnight can keep you in a perpetual state of dehydration, increasing your risk of heat-related illness. So be sure to eat dinner with heat-recovery in mind, and plan breakfast with dehydration prevention in mind.

### **Some other things to consider with your summer eating:**

- Eat smaller meals, and supplement with light snacks during your cool-down breaks
- Avoid sugary snacks and drinks
- Food can spoil more quickly, so keep that in mind when packing your lunch if you do not have access to a refrigerator
- Hydrate, HYDRATE, **HYDRATE** – drink small amounts of water frequently throughout the day
- Sports drinks DO include electrolytes but are also high in sugar – for every one you drink, consume the same amount of water to keep within a 1:1 ratio.
- Energy Drinks do NOT count as hydration!



A reduced appetite is not unusual when exposed to extreme heat for a long period of time, so the foods that you do eat need to work for you instead of against you. Thoughtful, high-nutrition meals will go a long way in helping your body to work at its full potential not only through the workday, but throughout the warm-to-hot weather season.

#### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**Eating is not the only consideration – be sure to Dress for the Heat every day as well:**

- **Light-colored, loose fitting, long-sleeved, breathable clothing**
- **Sunscreen, reapplied more than once per day**
- Wide brim hat that protects your face, neck, ears, & head
- UV-absorbent sunglasses.