

Meal suggestions for nurses on the go

by Cathryn Domrose, staff writer

These three meals suggested by nutrition experts — two dinners (with leftovers for lunch) and a breakfast — are examples of ways to balance carbohydrates, proteins, fruits and vegetables for optimal energy. They also take little time to make and use ingredients easily kept in cupboards and refrigerators. To round out the dinners, a green salad tossed with oil and vinegar or steamed vegetables with a little butter or oil make good sides for the pasta, and frozen corn with lime and chile or Mexican-style rice go well with the quesadillas.

Spaghetti with Tuna

Suggested by Kristen E. D'Anci, PhD, researcher in the department of psychology and nutrition and neurocognition laboratory at Tufts University in Massachusetts

(from a recipe by Chef John at Foodwishes.com)



- 1 pound spaghetti
(whole wheat tastes great with these flavors)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste *(or one anchovy fillet)*
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- Red pepper flakes, to taste
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 7 ounces tuna *(one can)*
- 3 cups tomato sauce
(if you're watching sodium levels, use a reduced-sodium variety)
- 1/2 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 3-4 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese *(optional)*

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. While it's heating, sauté capers in olive oil for five minutes over medium heat. Add anchovy paste or fillet and garlic. Sauté for one minute, breaking up anchovy fillet if using. Add white wine, sugar, and red pepper, and simmer for five minutes. Add tuna, breaking it into small pieces, then add tomato sauce, one cup of water from the pasta pot, and half the parsley. Simmer on low heat for 10 minutes. Cook pasta very al dente—about 1-2 minutes less than package directions—drain and return to pot (with heat turned off). Pour tuna sauce over pasta and toss, adding remaining parsley and parmesan cheese, if desired. Cover and let rest five minutes before serving. Makes eight servings, about 280 calories per serving (without cheese).



Super Quick Black-Bean Quesadillas

Suggested by Kerry Neville, MS, RD, a Washington-based nutrition consultant and national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association



- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 can Mexican-style chopped tomatoes
- 2/3 cup low-fat Mexican-style cheese, such as Monterey Jack, grated (*pre-grated is fine*)
- 4 whole wheat tortillas

Cook tomatoes and beans until most of the liquid has evaporated. Heat a whole-wheat tortilla in a pan sprayed with cooking spray. Put a few spoonfuls of filling on half the tortilla, top with cheese. Fold the tortilla, flip it, and serve. You can accompany this with fresh or frozen corn, heated with canned or fresh chopped chiles and a squeeze of lime; or quick Mexican-style rice (for a whole-grain version, mix pre-cooked brown rice with warm tomato salsa to taste). Makes four quesadillas, about 260 calories per quesadilla.



A Super Energy Breakfast

Suggested by Shawn M. Talbott, PhD, nutritional biochemist and author



Scramble or fry one or two eggs (the amount of eggs should match size of your palm). Top them with a large spoonful of warm tomato salsa. Serve with a slice of whole-grain toast with a little butter, or a whole-wheat tortilla, and a fruit smoothie made by blending orange juice and frozen berries.

Other even quicker balanced breakfast ideas include: whole-wheat toast and peanut butter and a piece of fruit, whole-grain cereal with milk and berries, yogurt with granola or oats and fruit or half of a whole-wheat pita pocket with hummus and fresh tomatoes.