In the modern world of sports many athletes, both recreational and elite, travel frequently to training camps or competitions. This applies particularly to New Zealand athletes who live in relative isolation from the rest of the world. Regardless of whether travelling by car, bus, or plane (domestically or internationally), travel has a tendency to disrupt normal eating patterns. This can easily result in suboptimal nutrition, which in turn can affect training or competition performance - an issue of major concern for an athlete who intends to deliver their very best performance.

TRAVEL RELATED CHALLENGES:
Depending on the mode and distance of travel, the challenges athletes commonly face that may interfere with healthy eating include:

- Altered and irregular meal times
- Encountering unfamiliar food
- Lack of availability of some favourite foods and fluids
- Limited availability of healthy foods and beverages
- Food and water safety issues
- Altered environmental conditions (e.g. heat, cold, altitude)
- Jetlag resulting from long-haul travel

Potential effects on diet may include a reduced carbohydrate and increased fat intake, inadequate intake of fibre essential vitamins and minerals, and/or dehydration.

The key to preventing such problems is to PLAN well ahead of travel.* Before travelling overseas it is wise to research the destination country with regard to climate, food availability and food and water safety. Plan optimal eating and sleeping schedules for long-haul travel in advance, and take a selection of healthy snacks and sports foods from home, both for use during travel and at your destination. It is a good idea to ask a sports dietitian or nutritionist to help you with this.

*By Nutritionist Claire Turnbull - www.claireturnbull.co.nz
TRAVELLING BY BUS, COACH OR CAR:
- Look at your journey and plan your stops before you leave
- Pack a few bottles of water to keep yourself well hydrated
- Pack healthy meals and snacks to take with you so you don’t have to rely on service stations, takeaways and dairies.

Aim for things that are easy to eat and nutritious such as sandwiches made with grainy bread, fresh fruit, muesli cereal bars, nuts and dried fruit.

Taking along fresh vegetables such as cucumber and tomato in a separate container and slicing these onto bread during a roadside stop, prevents sandwiches from going soggy.

TRAVELLING BY PLANE:
Travel within New Zealand should not present major problems, as long as you pack some snacks and fluids to have on hand when needed. Long-haul travel, on the other hand, can result in jetlag particularly when crossing a large number of time zones.

Symptoms associated with jetlag include fatigue, poor sleep, bowel disturbances and mood swings. Simple strategies like going to bed early the night before departure or when boarding the plane; adopting destination times for eating and sleeping as soon as you arrive; and doing some light exercise during a stopover will help minimise the effects of jetlag. If practical, try to arrive at your destination well ahead of competition time to allow your body to adjust to the new time zone.

IN-FLIGHT STRATEGIES:
The following tips will help make long flights less gruelling and reduce the symptoms associated with jetlag:
- Choose either the regular meal option or order a vegetarian meal option in advance.
- If the airline meals are too small for you, ask for extra bread, fruit or yoghurt if available.
- Carry additional high carbohydrate snacks on board (see list below), but do remember that if you are inactive for long periods of time, you may not require many additional snacks so avoid eating just because you have nothing else to do.
- Have extra snacks on hand in case of delays during stopovers.
- Take a drink bottle on board and ask for regular top-ups so you stay well hydrated.
- Avoid drinking alcohol and go easy on caffeinated beverages e.g. coffee or fizzy drinks.
- Move around the cabin at regular intervals.

Make sure you have some of your own entertainment on board such as books, games or music.

ON ARRIVAL AT YOUR DESTINATION:
These simple strategies will help you overcome jetlag and make it easier for you to settle into your new environment:
- If arriving during the day, do some light exercise. This should be done in daylight and well ahead of bedtime.
- Avoid napping during the day. Get into the local day/night cycle straightaway.
- Eat some carbohydrate before bed as this may help you get to sleep at night.
- Investigate the following as soon after arrival as you can or better still, ahead of travel:
  - Location of local supermarkets and farmers markets and their opening and closing times
  - Local eateries
  - Whether or not the local water supply is safe. It is a good idea to use bottled water in many places.

SNACKS TO TAKE ON THE PLANE (IF ALLOWED BY THE AIRLINE)
- Water bottle to fill up on plane.
- Muesli/cereal bars
- High carbohydrate sports bars
- Nuts/seeds/dried fruit

SNACKS FOR USE ABROAD
- Breakfast cereal
- Instant porridge sachets
- Low fat muesli bars
- Dried fruit/nuts/seeds
- Crackers
- Canned creamed rice, spaghetti, baked beans
- Canned fruit
- Sports drink powder
- Meal supplement powder
- Sports bars
- Fruit juice concentrate
- Vegemite / Marmite