

Exam-Time Eating Strategies

When studying for exams, many students rely on energy and coffee drinks, vending machine snacks, or fast food just to save time.

However, these items do not provide the fuel your body needs to focus over the long haul. Try adding these smart snacking strategies to your study plan to keep you energized and (most importantly) help you ace your tests!

Eat at regular intervals - Include snacks in between meals so that you eat every 3-4 hours to keep your blood sugar levels up, keeping your mind alert.

Practice portion control - Choose items that are already packaged in individual servings. If you are buying in bulk, measure out one serving in a separate container or plastic bag to prevent overeating.

Don't fear the carbs - Carbohydrates are the primary energy source for the brain. Include complex carbs (100% whole grains, whole wheat, fruits, or vegetables) instead of processed carbohydrates (chips, cookies, candy, sugary beverages, and white bread).

Include protein and healthy fats - Combining protein and fats with carbs will stabilize blood sugar levels for longer lasting energy and concentration.

Stay hydrated - Nothing tanks concentration quicker than dehydration. Use non-sugary options most of the time: water, tea, flavored waters.

Keep food safety in mind - Foodborne illnesses will side-line your study schedule. Choose non-perishable foods or keep perishable foods cold with an ice pack

in an insulated container.

Plan ahead - Stock up on healthy options at the grocery store.

Use the lists below to combine complex carbohydrates with good sources of protein and healthy fats for snacks that provide longer lasting energy.

Complex Carbohydrates:

- Fruit (all fresh/canned in own juice/dried)
- Baby carrots
- Celery sticks
- Bell pepper, cucumber slices
- Any vegetable, really
- Oatmeal
- Whole-grain breads/cereal/crackers
- Bars - grains/nuts/fruit
- Pretzels
- Popcorn

Protein and Healthy Fats:

- Low fat Milk (regular/soy)
- Low fat yogurt (regular/Greek/Soy)
- Cheese (string, Baby Bell, Laughing Cow)
- Cottage cheese
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Peanut butter and other nut butters
- Nuts
- Hummus
- Edamame (soy beans)
- Deli meat (chicken, turkey, ham, roast beef)

For more information, including snack combinations and vending machine options, read *Smart Study Snacks* at www.health.arizona.edu/handouts.

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CAMPUS HEALTH

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Food and nutrition services (including healthy eating, cooking skills, weight management, digestive problems, hormonal and cardiovascular diseases, and eating disorders) are offered year-round at Campus Health. Call (520) 621-6483 to make an appointment.