Eating for Study Success

# Eating Well

Eating well while you study can help you stay alert and make the best use of your time. Enjoy a variety of everyday foods from the five food groups to make sure you get everything you need to stay at your peak during study time. The five food groups are grain (cereal) foods, vegetables, fruit, meat, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods.

# Tips for Eating While Studying

Food is fuel for your brain. Give yourself a break from studying and make time to enjoy regular meals and snacks. Here are some strategies to help:

* Sit down and eat away from your desk when possible.
* Keep hydrated and alert by trying to drink between six to eight glasses of fluid a day.
* Choose water as your main drink. Reduced fat milk or herbal tea can add variety.

**Food Ideas**

It might be tempting to reward or distract yourself by eating *sometimes* *foods* like lollies, chocolate or biscuits. These foods start by giving you a rush of energy but can leave you feeling flat and tired after eating. Instead, make sure you have some quick and easy to prepare foods at home – here are some ideas!

**Snacks:**

* a tub of yoghurt
* a piece of fresh fruit
* a handful of nuts and dried fruit
* raisin toast or crumpets
* crackers with cheese or peanut butter
* milkshake or fruit smoothie
* a bowl of cereal with milk.

**Meals:**

* poached or scrambled eggs on toast
* English muffins with avocado and tomato
* baked beans and cheese
* tuna and salad in a wrap
* oven baked fish and chips with salad
* jacket potato with baked beans and cheese
* cold roast meat and salad.

# Eating on Exam Day:

* Before a morning exam, eat breakfast to fuel your brain and stop you getting hungry. Try:
	+ cereal with low fat milk
	+ toast with peanut butter, cheese or avocado
	+ yoghurt with tinned or fresh fruit
	+ baked beans or eggs on toast.
* Before an afternoon exam have a light lunch so you don’t feel tired and sleepy. Try:
	+ vegetable soup with a bread roll
	+ sandwich with tuna and salad
	+ toasted sandwich with lean ham, cheese and pineapple
	+ wrap with lean roast meat and salad.
* Eat something familiar, rather than a new or unusual food just in case it upsets your stomach.
* If you are too anxious to eat solid food, try a fruit smoothie, milkshake or liquid breakfast drink.

**What About Caffeine?**

The caffeine from coffee, energy drinks and tea acts on the brain and nervous system. It can make some people feel more alert and less tired. But drinking too many of these drinks can make you feel anxious, irritable and unable to concentrate or sleep.

If you already drink coffee or tea, it is best to keep it to one or two drinks per day. Avoid having them in the evening. Switch to decaffeinated coffee, tea or herbal tea in the evening so that it doesn’t affect your sleep.

Energy drinks are not encouraged around study time. As well as caffeine, they are also high in sugar and acid which can be bad for your teeth, especially if you sip them slowly.

**Other Healthy Study Tips**

* Reward yourself for being productive by doing something you enjoy, rather than with food. For example:
	+ Listen to some music
	+ Take your dog for a walk
	+ Relax in the bath
	+ Catch up with a friend.
* Try to go to bed and wake up around the same time each day. This will help your body get into a routine so it’s easier to fall asleep and you will wake up feeling better.
* Some people work better at the beginning of the day, while others work best in the evening. Work out when you are most productive and do some intense revision during this time.
* Take a break every few hours and try to get outside in the fresh air.
* Keep active to help boost your mood, recharge and release any stress.
* Give yourself a physical and mental break from studying, by sharing meals with your family.