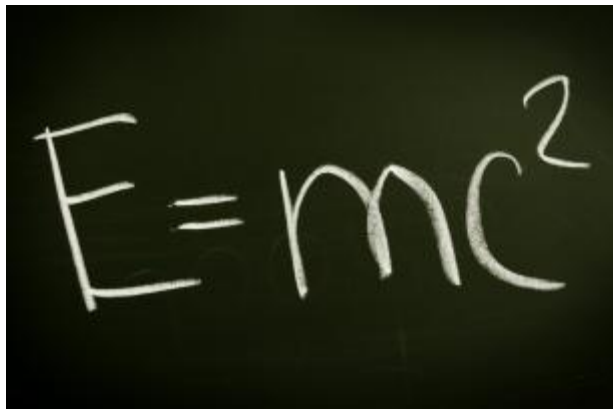


10 Tips for Healthy Eating During Exams

posted in Tips and Techniques by Jessica Howard



When you're studying for finals, good nutrition often slides way down on the priority list. It's easy to get into the habit of glugging coffee and gobbling take-out pizza, because you don't want to waste time on food preparation. But, actually, good nutrition *should be* part of your study plan because it's going to help you ace those tests. The better the fuel your brain gets, the better you'll study. It's a...well...no-brainer.

Here are 10 tips for eating right during exams:

1. **How do I eat smarter?** Meeting daily [vitamin and mineral requirements](#) will make doing your best much easier. [Iron and B vitamins](#) are especially important to maintaining the physical and mental energy necessary to study well. Iron-containing foods include red meat, cereals and spinach; one good meal idea is [chili](#) because it contains ground beef and kidney beans. Foods that contain B vitamins include whole-grains, wheat germ, eggs and nuts. Fish and soy are other foods that are said to help [boost your brain](#) by providing the nutrients it needs.
2. **Dude, chewable Vitamin C is not a meal.** [Dietary supplements](#) are good, but real food is better. An orange contains not only Vitamin C, but fibre, phytochemicals, beta carotene and other minerals – so it can't be replaced by a pill. When you're heading for the library, pack whole-food items like apples, bananas, clementines, carrot sticks or dried apricots.
3. **Eat at regular intervals.** Eating [regular meals](#) helps keep nutrient and energy levels more stable, curbing the temptation of empty-calorie snacks in the vending machine.
4. **Big meals keep on turning ... in your stomach.** You might find that eating the standard three-big-meals-a-day slows you down mentally and physically. Consider 5 or 6 well-balanced, [smaller meals](#), like toast spread with peanut butter, hummus or [tuna](#), or a piece of cheese with fruit.
5. **Meet breakfast, your new study buddy.** While much is said about the [reasons to eat breakfast](#), less known are the [best ways to eat smart in the morning](#). Coffee and a donut just don't cut it. The idea is to get some protein, calcium, fibre and a piece of fruit or a vegetable in there. So, a bowl of cereal with milk and a piece of fruit would do the trick. Or try a cereal bar with milk. We have some additional [quick breakfast ideas](#) for you to enjoy!
6. **Going bananas? Good.** Fruit ranks high among the [best foods you can eat](#) for your brain. [Blueberries](#) (which can be bought frozen in bags) get a lot of attention because they contain powerful antioxidants and other nutrients. The [natural sugars](#) in fruit offer clean energy, so you don't experience the crash that follows consumption of refined sugar.
7. **Choose powerful vegetables.** Not all vegetables are created equal. The darker the color, the higher the concentration of nutrients. For example, [spinach has more to offer the mind](#) and body than iceberg lettuce. Other great vegetable choices include bell peppers, broccoli and sweet potatoes.

8. **Smart snacking can enhance studying.** [Snack smart](#) while studying and you may find that you retain more. Try to get two food groups into your snacks to balance the nutrients and keep your blood-sugar level stable. Some smart snack examples are banana with peanut butter, a small [baked potato](#) with cottage cheese, or an [English muffin pizza](#).
9. **Gather simple recipes for nourishing foods.** It's easy to feed the brain well. No-fuss [recipes](#) let you eat to succeed, without taking too much time. Here are four ideas:
 - Combine [scrambled eggs](#) with toast, cheese or salsa
 - Spend 15 minutes preparing [chili](#) and continue studying while it simmers for two hours
 - Go Tex Mex with [quesadillas](#), adding whatever veggies you've got on hand
 - A little chopping is all it takes to construct a hearty [Chef's Salad](#)
10. **Stay well hydrated.** Choose your beverages well, though. [Caffeine](#) and sugar should be kept to a minimum. Since too much caffeine can make you jittery, try to drink [moderate amounts](#): 400 to 450 mg per day, the equivalent of 2/2.5 cups, (16 to 20 ounces or 500 to 625 ml). Better choices include water, fruit juice, milk, and anti-oxidant-rich [green tea](#).

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