

## EAT

There is a relationship between what you eat, when you eat it, and how you feel.

**Proteins** (3 ounces will do—about the size of a deck of cards)

*Includes seafood, chicken, lean beef, cottage cheese, skim/low-fat milk, tofu, low-fat yogurt, eggs*

- Increase alertness and motivation
- Have an energizing effect on your mind

**Carbohydrates** (1½ ounces will do, eaten alone, without protein)

*Includes breads, cereals, crackers, cookies, pasta, potatoes, rice, corn*

- Have a calming effect
- Ease anxiety and frustration

**Fruits and Vegetables** (5-6 servings a day)

- Provide antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals
- Improve memory and reduces stress

Choose foods that are low in fat—high-fat meals cause blood to be diverted away from the brain, leading to drowsiness and decreased mental energy. Doubling the amount of protein or carbohydrate does not double the effect—it only adds calories.

**Planning an all-night study session? Not recommended, but it happens.**

- Eat dinner as late as possible (9:00 or 9:30 p.m.)
- Dinner should be low in fat
  - Good: Chicken (skinless), vegetable, rice, fresh fruit, water
  - Bad: Cheeseburger, fries, chocolate cake, soda
- Eat the protein first
- Once you have started studying, take a food break every few hours (low-fat protein, fruit, nuts)
- Caffeine in moderation
- Get up and move around from time to time
- Breakfast—eat protein first, before carbohydrates, to avoid a drop in mental energy (no bagel bombs—try hard-boiled eggs or yogurt with fruit and whole wheat toast)



**Bottom line?**

- Avoid saturated fat and simple sugars at all meals
- Caffeine in moderation
- Eat protein before carbohydrates to maintain alertness and mental energy
- Avoid eating carbohydrates without proteins, unless you are ready to relax

**Fun Facts:** Research has shown that eating peppermint while *studying* for an exam, then eating peppermint while *taking* the exam improves recall of information. Also, chewing gum may improve concentration by increasing the flow of oxygen to areas of the brain that control attention.