Energizing Exam-Time Snacks

What you eat during exam-time impacts your energy and alertness. By choosing snacks and meals that contain all three nutrient groups—protein, carbohydrates and fats—you can maximize your ability to study.

**Balance ‘carbs’ with proteins**

High carbohydrate snacks like crackers, cookies, candy, chips, pretzels, breads, bagels and plain pastas, will give you immediate energy. However, when eaten by themselves sugary and starchy foods can lead to an energy drop later on. Symptoms of a carbohydrate overload can be lethargy, sleepiness, and inability to concentrate. Just the feelings you **don’t** need at exam-time! Adding in protein will keep you “perkier”. A little healthy fat will also help stabilize your energy.

The following snacks offer a combination of the three nutrient groups so you can maximize your study energy!

**Homemade Trail Mix**

In a large bowl, mix 1 cup each peanuts or soy nuts, raisins or other chopped dried fruits with 2 cups low sugar/high fiber cereal like Cheerios® and a handful of M&Ms®. Store in a tightly sealed plastic bowl. Serve yourself just the amount you need at the moment. Store the rest in the pantry or cabinet. Enjoy with a glass of skim or low-fat milk.

**Protein Smoothie**

In a blender, mix a ripe banana, 1 scoop of vanilla soy protein powder and ¼ - 1 cup 1% or skim milk. Add ice if desired. For a longer lasting and tastier version, add 1 tablespoon of peanut butter. Yummy! [Purchase soy protein powder in health food stores, Sam’s Club or GNC. Try it!]

**Bean and Cheese Quesadilla**

On a flour tortilla spread a layer of refried beans (use the vegetarian-kind), sprinkle your choice of grated cheese on the beans and top with another tortilla. Put in microwave or heat in frying pan that has been sprayed with oil, turning once, until cheese is melted and the beans are heated through. Slice into “pizza” slices and serve with salsa.

**Microwave Scrambled Eggs With Toast or Bagel**

Save time and clean up if you scramble eggs in the microwave! Here’s how:

Spray a microwavable bowl with oil. Add eggs and beat lightly in the bowl. (The bowl should be large enough to allow the eggs to rise up when heated.) Cook at medium high temperature for 1-2 minutes or until you see the eggs bubble up. Remove them when they are just past the runny stage (just starting to thicken). Do not overcook! Take them out of the microwave and let them sit 1-2 minutes. The eggs will set and look like the stovetop variety!

Try adding some grated cheese or chopped green onion before cooking for a zestier taste. Serve with multi-grain toast or bagel.

**Good Ole’ Energy-Packed Favorites**

- cottage cheese with fresh fruit
- cheese and crackers
- peanut butter, crackers and milk
- cheese stick (choose those with 4-6g fat/serving) and fresh or dried fruit
- baked tortilla chips with store bought bean dip or hummus (you can purchase hummus in the deli section of most grocery stores)
- home-made ham, turkey, roast beef sandwich
- tuna and crackers or tuna sandwich
- chicken and egg salad sandwiches made with light mayonnaise and whole wheat bread