



Staying Energized, Maintaining Weight... ... Nutrition Tips for Busy Students

Erratic schedules, food availability, and decision-making challenges often make healthy food choices tough for students. The result may include energy highs and lows, general lethargy, and unwanted weight gain or loss. Use these "student-friendly" ideas to help balance your energy and weight, and to provide a general sense of well-being.

➤ **Eat when hungry, stop when full.** Seems simple, but this could make a big difference. Avoid mindless eating. **Create some structure** in your day, even if it varies from day to day, to help prevent mindless grazing. Eat foods you really like and savor them, take smaller bites, chew well, take your time. Avoid eating right from the bag, carton, or box; take out a satisfying serving and put the rest away. Go back for more only if you are truly hungry.

➤ **Drink enough fluids** throughout the day to keep your **urine pale and clear**, but **avoid nutritionally "empty" calories** (regular sodas, lemonade, punch, fruit drinks, alcoholic beverages). Best choices: water, milk (up to 32 oz/day), calcium fortified fruit juice (8-oz), weak tea, flavored waters, crystal light.

➤ **Eat something ("breakfast") within an hour of waking up** to get your metabolism running and to avoid "catch up" eating later in the day.

➤ **Plan ahead.** Buy handy foods to carry with you during the day, whether it is a whole meal, add-ons to food you buy around campus, or snacks. Get some Baggies and pack foods the night before, when possible. An insulated lunch bag with blue ice frees you to also take refrigerated items. Some good choices are:

- Fresh fruit
- Baby carrots, green/red peppers, sliced cucumbers (low fat ranch dressing for dip)
- Trail mix (make your own using nuts, dried fruit, and cereal, pretzels, etc.)
- Peanut (and other nut) butter
- Pretzels
- Tea - herbal
- Whole grain bread, crackers
- Cereals (to eat dry) - Cheerios[®], Frosted Mini-Wheats[®], Kashi Go-Lean[®], Raisin Squares[®], Chex[®]
- Nutrition bars or drinks - look for those around 200 calories with 7 or more grams of protein
- Nuts and soy nuts
- Oatmeal
- Deli meats
- Yogurt - 1% or fat free
- String cheese, part-skim mozzarella, or cottage cheese, low fat processed cheese slices
- Soups - ready to eat (with beans or lentils for protein)
- Popcorn - low fat
- Sugar-free hot chocolate
- Tuna

> **Make healthy late night and study snack choices.** Balance carbohydrates with protein. Include some nuts, tuna, meat, cheese, yogurt, or milk with your carb snacks like fruit, veggies, crackers, pretzels, bagels, etc. See food and beverage choices above.

> **When eating** out or at the Student Unions, **reduce the fat and improve the nutrition** by regularly using a few of these ideas:

Instead of:

•Large, specialty hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot dogs, mayo and sauces

•Hamburgers or beef items

• "Salad" sandwiches (chicken, tuna, egg)

•Putting dressing on your salad

•Fries, onion rings, regular chips

•Supersizing

Choose:

•Regular-sized hamburgers with added catsup, BBQ sauce, pickles, lettuce, tomatoes, onion

•Grilled chicken sandwiches or other grilled chicken or bean dishes (e.g. tacos, burritos)

•Deli sandwiches with lean meats (turkey, chicken, ham and roast beef), a small amount of cheese, and lots of vegetables

•Put dressing on the side. A tablespoon (~100 calories) is about the size of a book of matches. Low fat dressing is half the calories.

•Baked chips, pretzels, carrots (you pack)

•Milk (white or chocolate), low fat frozen yogurt, piece of fruit if you're still hungry

> **Don't over do caffeine.** Most experts recommend no more than 400mg per day. Caffeine content of some of the more popular beverages on campus are: 12 oz cola - 65mg; brewed coffee - 125mg (12 oz) to 250mg (Starbucks Venti), one shot of espresso - 35mg.

> **Read labels.** Look for the Serving Size, Total Calories, and:

•Fat grams: **3 grams or less total fat per 100 calories** to keep overall fat at less than 30% of total calories

•Protein grams: Your daily protein need in grams is roughly half of your body weight in pounds

•Fiber grams: Daily goal is 20 - 35 grams per day

•Calcium %: Based on your daily need of 1000mg

> **Take a multivitamin/mineral daily** as an insurance policy against the gaps that can occur when hectic schedules undo even your best intentions.

> **Take a calcium supplement daily** if you eat little or no dairy products or calcium-fortified foods (OJ, cereal). You need at least a total of 1000 mg per day for great bones and to possibly help with weight maintenance.