

ht for delhi

BOARD EXAMINATIONS

SECOND OF A SERIES

Watch your diet for better concentration

BEAT STRESS Experts say students should avoid heavy meals and eat lots of fruits with enough liquids for good health and improved memory during exams



Health experts say students should avoid burgers, pizzas and colas around exam time to improve concentration and boost memory. PHOTO: IMAGESBAZAAR



Rhythmia Kaul
v.rhythmika.kaul@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Believe it or not, but what you eat makes a lot of difference in how active you stay throughout the day. And with the exams nearing, you need to be particularly careful about your diet to ensure your memory and concentration get the necessary boost.

Go easy on burgers, pizzas and colas to be able to concentrate better, warn health experts.

"Switching to healthier options such as fresh fruits and vegetables helps a great deal in reducing overall stress levels. If you must binge, go for grilled and baked items instead of the fried ones," said nutritionist Neha Arora.

BREAKFAST—IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY
Breakfast must not be skipped at any

cost. It is important to provide the body energy after eight to nine hours of fasting. And it must have a good mix of carbohydrates and proteins; however, white bread and sugar-rich items such as biscuits must be avoided completely as they are instant energy boosters that hits the body metabolism adversely.

NO HEAVY MEALS
Eating heavy meals during stress can lead to irritable bowel syndrome that can affect your concentration.

Six meals in a day are ideal; with three major meals and three small meals in between. Lunch should comprise roti, dal, vegetable and curd. For non-vegetarians, chicken and fish are a good source of essential protein. Dinner should have at least one protein-rich item, but must be the lightest meal of the day. Curd is a must have, as it improves nerve impulses and neutralizes acidity.

CONSUME FRUITS
Fruits should be taken as fillers in-between meals. The high-fibre content found in fruits and vegetables helps relieve constipation, which is one of the side-effects of stress.

Carrot in particular is rich in vitamins necessary for reducing stress, and is readily available during this season. One can also opt for sprouts that are full of essential nutrients and are easy to digest, so one doesn't feel lethargic after consuming sprouts.

FLUID NOURISHMENT
It is essential for the body to stay hydrated. When the body does not have enough fluids to work efficiently, it can develop muscle cramps, dizziness or what is called lightheadedness. Not just water; one should have fluids in the form of fresh lime water, coconut water, buttermilk etc to meet the body's requirement and to maintain electrolyte balance.

AVOID MEDICINES
There are a variety of memory enhancers available in market these days, but experts do not recommend popping in

Switching to healthier options such as fresh fruits and vegetables helps in reducing overall stress levels. If you must binge, go for grilled, baked items instead of the fried ones.

NEHA ARORA, nutritionist

"At such young age, you do not really have memory issues," says Pulkit Sharma, clinical psychologist at Imago-Centre for Self.

"Their problem is more to do with stress and anxiety. For them, the focus should be on better managing stress and anxiety and not resort to medicines," said Sharma.

"No matter what the label says, one must keep it in mind that all medicines have an impact on the body. There is a huge market of nutritional supplements but you must not take them without proper medical guidance, even if those are labelled as herbal."

How to enhance memory

The mantra to improved health and sharper memory lies in not just what you eat, but also when you eat and how you eat

PULL UP YOUR ROUTINE

- Form a regular schedule of getting up, and going to bed and make sure that you stick to it
- Have an early dinner
- SLEEP EARLY:** 10-11pm appears to be a decent time to sleep in order to get up early. It will ensure that you do not compromise on your sleep and get up fresh. Make sure the room is dark and without noise.
- Do not take naps during the day

WATCH YOUR DIET

- Have less of fried or fatty foods. Munch on these, instead: **Fruits** (papaya, guava, citrus fruits, pineapple, apple), **Salads** (preferably green), **Nuts** (almonds, walnuts), **Green sprouts**, **Grilled vegetable sandwich** with little cheese and cucumber
- If you take too much of caffeine (tea/ coffee), try reducing the amount being consumed throughout the day. Limit or avoid energy drinks with caffeine. Avoid heavy meals especially late at night as they tend to make you feel sleepier
- Taking a glass of warm milk before going to bed will also calm your mind and will help you get sound sleep
- Take adequate intake of water (6-8 glasses/ day)

TAKE OUT TIME TO UNWIND

- Take regular breaks every 2-3 hours. Utilise these breaks for short bursts of exercise of 5-7 mins each, for example stretching exercises, skipping rope, on the spot jogging
- Try listening to some soothing music before going to bed
- Mentally dealing with the day's unfinished business is also helpful. Write down all your worries before you go to bed. This may help to clear them from your mind and prevent them re-surfacing during your sleep

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