

Avoiding the Afternoon Slump for Residential Colleges Students

Do you ever feel low in energy by mid-afternoon and find yourself reaching for high sugar snacks?



We need energy from food for maintenance, growth, and everyday activities. Boost your energy by fuelling your body with the right type of foods. Here are our 10 top tips to avoid the afternoon slump and keep you feeling great for the rest of your day.

1. Choose slow-release carbohydrates

Slow-release carbohydrates keep our blood sugar, energy levels and appetite steady. Include these foods in snacks & meals for longer lasting energy. Great sources include rolled oats, natural muesli, wholegrain pasta, multigrain bread, basmati rice, tinned legumes such as chickpeas and lentils and sweet potato.

2. Don't skip meals

Eating regular meals every 2-3 hours helps keep energy levels steady and avoid the afternoon crash. Start the day right with breakfast and include healthy morning and afternoon snacks such as fruit, yoghurt or nuts.

3. Include at least 5 serves of vegetables every day

Vegetables contain essential vitamins and minerals which play an important role in energy production. Add vegetables to a breakfast omelette, and a side of vegetables to your lunch and dinner meal. Vegetable sticks such as carrots, celery and cucumber also make easy, nutritious snacks.

4. Include 2 serves of fruit every day

Just like vegetables, fruits also contain many important vitamins and minerals required to unlock energy in our body. Whole fruit contains fibre, which helps slow down digestion, so choose fruit instead of sugary bars and chocolate to get that sweet taste plus other nutritional benefits.

5. Aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses of water every day

Dehydration is a common cause of fatigue and can often be confused for hunger. Make sure you carry a water bottle with you to sip from throughout the day.

6. Enjoy iron rich food sources

Iron helps to transport oxygen around the body for energy production. Include iron rich sources of food in your diet such as red meat, eggs and leafy greens.

7. Boost your B vitamin intake

B vitamins play a key role in releasing energy from food to fuel our body. Include B-vitamin rich sources of food in your diet such as wholegrains, eggs, meat and fish.

8. Watch your caffeine intake

Caffeine is a stimulant and in large doses can disturb sleep and contribute to dehydration. After the initial burst of energy, caffeine can cause a greater feeling of fatigue and low energy. Be smart with your caffeine intake and remember it's not just coffee that contains caffeine. It can also be found in black tea, energy drinks, chocolate and cola drinks.

9. Consider other factors besides diet alone

Sleep, stress levels and exercise also play a role in energy levels. Inadequate sleep and exercise can impact on your energy as can high stress lifestyles. Take time to think and reflect. Try devising a plan to help manage what may be an issue for you and speak to your parent and/or teacher about stress management tips and study habits to get you through tougher times such as the exam periods.

10. Speak to your healthcare professional

If you are concerned about persistent low energy levels it may be worthwhile to talk to your doctor to eliminate any underlying medical issues. For example, iron deficiency is common in adolescent girls and can be a factor that contributes to a lack in energy (fatigue).