

Fuelling for Exam Success

Nutrition and Wellbeing Tips
to Help You Thrive During
Studying & Exam Time

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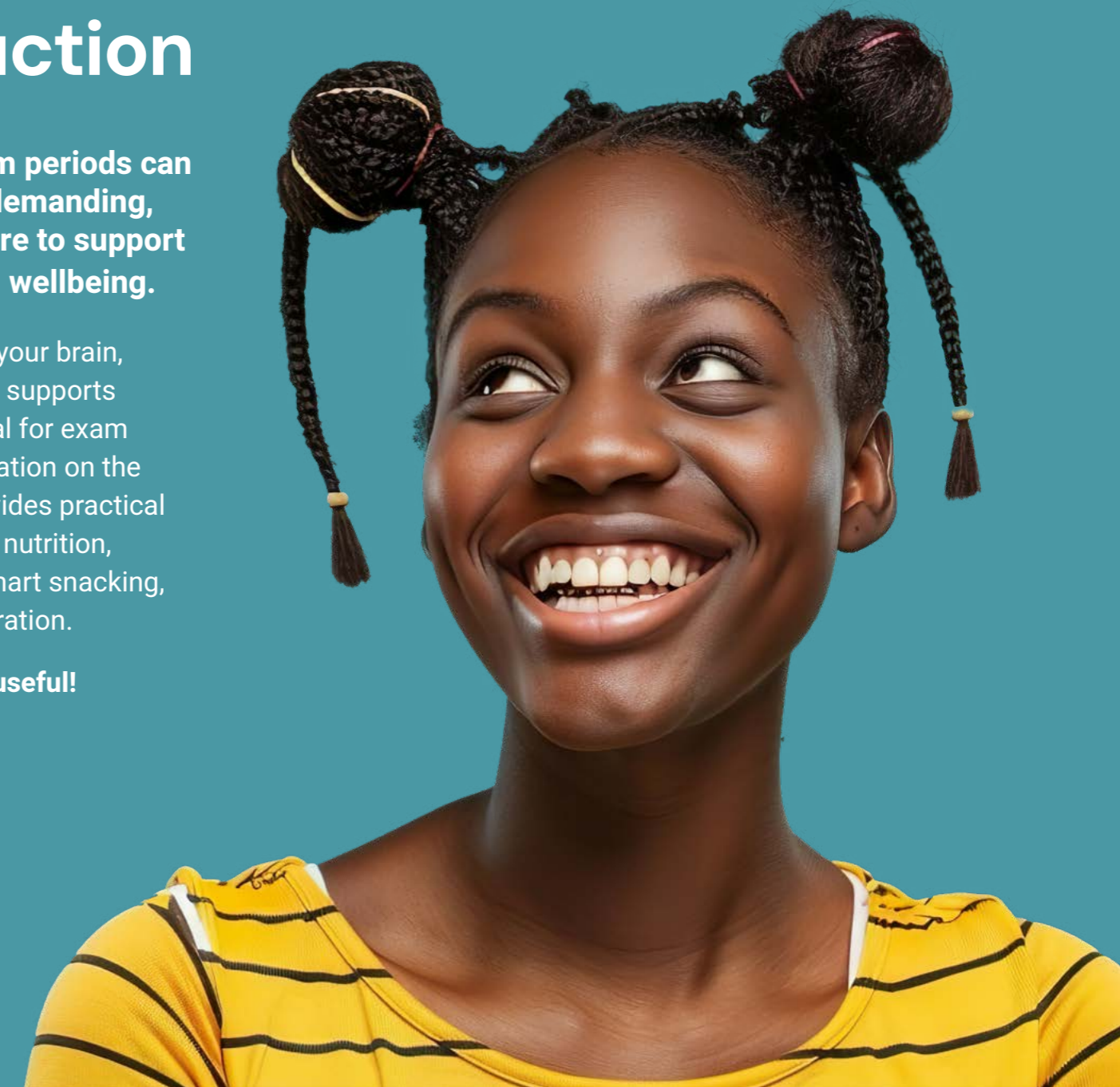
Introduction

Revision and exam periods can be stressful and demanding, so our guide is here to support your nutrition and wellbeing.

Good nutrition fuels your brain, enhances focus, and supports learning - all essential for exam success. The information on the following pages provides practical tips on brain-friendly nutrition, healthy hydration, smart snacking, and exam-day preparation.

We hope you find it useful!

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Fuelling Your Brain

Your brain's primary fuel is glucose, which comes from carbohydrates. Since the brain can't store glucose, it needs a constant supply to function well. In fact, the brain uses around 25% of the glucose in your body, and during intense mental activity, like revising or taking exams, this demand increases.

Key Nutrients for Brain Health

- **Carbohydrates:** Wholegrain pasta, rice, bread, potatoes, fruits, and vegetables provide a steady source of glucose.
- **Omega-3:** Found in oily fish (like salmon and mackerel), walnuts, chia seeds, and rapeseed oil, omega-3 supports brain function.
- **B Vitamins:** Green leafy vegetables, eggs, and dairy help produce energy for the brain.
- **Iron:** Spinach, beans, and red meat deliver oxygen to the brain, supporting mental sharpness.
- **Zinc:** Found in nuts and seeds, zinc supports memory and cognitive function.

Hydration

Since 75% of the brain is water, staying hydrated is vital for clear thinking and concentration. Even mild dehydration can lead to headaches and poor focus, so make hydration a priority.

Tips for Staying Hydrated

- Aim for 1.5 to 2 litres of fluids per day (around 6-8 glasses).
- Choose water, no-added-sugar drinks, or naturally flavoured water.
- Avoid energy drinks. The caffeine and sugar spikes may feel helpful at first but often result in headaches, stomach aches, and disrupted sleep.

6-8 glasses of fluid a day



*Did you know!
The best way to check if you are dehydrated is the colour of your urine, the darker the colour the more dehydrated you are and more you need to drink*



The best way to stay hydrated is with water





Snacks can help you to achieve good nutrition and exam success



Healthy Snacking

Snacking can be beneficial during long study sessions, providing a quick boost of energy and preventing hunger. But not all snacks are created equal.

Smart Snack Choices

- **Go for balance:** Snacks with a mix of carbohydrates and protein, such as carrot sticks with hummus, fresh fruit with yoghurt, or a handful of nuts, offer sustained energy.
- **Avoid sugar spikes:** Sugary snacks may give a quick burst of energy, but the subsequent energy crash can leave you feeling more tired.



General Wellbeing

Nutrition is just one part of the equation - your overall wellbeing matters too.

Make Time to...

Prioritise Sleep

- Aim for a consistent bedtime to support restful sleep.
- Avoid screens for at least an hour before bed, as blue light disrupts sleep.

Stay Active

- Physical activity releases endorphins, which improve mood and reduce stress.
- Exercise boosts memory, concentration, and energy levels, helping you feel more focused and motivated.

Take Breaks

- Step away from your desk every 1-2 hours for a 10-15 minute break.
- Get fresh air and stretch to reset your mind before diving back into study mode.

*Regular exercise
can help to improve
concentration
and mood*



Planning what you are going to eat before the day will help make exam day easier



How to Fuel for Success on Exam Day



Morning Fuel

- Eat a balanced breakfast: Opt for slow-release carbohydrates and protein, like eggs on wholemeal toast or porridge with fruit and nuts.
- Don't skip meals: Even if you feel anxious, eating will sustain your energy levels.

Pre-Exam Snacks

- Have a small snack that includes carbohydrates, such as a banana, wholemeal toast, or a cereal bar low in sugar. This provides a steady energy supply for the exam.
- Stick to familiar foods to avoid digestive discomfort caused by nerves.

Hydration

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Limit your caffeine intake to avoid jittery nerves and a racing heart.

With the right nutrition, hydration, and wellbeing practices, you'll be ready to tackle exam season with clarity, energy, and focus.

Good Luck!

Exam season can be a challenging time, but with the right nutrition, hydration, and wellbeing strategies, you can stay sharp, focused, and energised. Prioritising whole, balanced meals, staying hydrated, and maintaining overall wellbeing will help you feel more confident and prepared. Don't forget the importance of good sleep, regular breaks, and physical activity to support your mental health.

By following these tips, you'll be well-equipped to perform at your best and achieve exam success.

Good luck with your exams - you've got this!



This guide endeavours to offer students useful information related to nutrition and wellbeing. We know exams can cause stress and anxiety. If you need further support or advice, please visit the [NHS website](#) or seek support from a registered charity such as [Young Minds](#).

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