

## Eat Healthful Foods

Several of my colleagues pay a great deal of attention to what they eat and drink, the amounts they eat and drink, and when they eat and drink. The effects of their good choices on their weight, appearance, and energy levels are evident. In our classroom fatigue management training, we emphasize that an important element of self-care is to **eat healthful foods in small portions at appropriate times during the day**. This helps us maintain energy levels and manage our blood sugar levels. We also increase our ability to achieve a normal weight.



Most workplaces have snacks, but they may not be healthful snacks. I love this picture of one breakfast option at a meeting. There were some healthful options, but most people chose the doughnuts. Would you choose a doughnut or an apple? Would your peers influence you?

We should plan meals and snacks that include a combination of lean protein and complex carbohydrates. Here are a few suggestions of healthful foods to bring to work with you:

- Soup and sandwich
- Oatmeal packet, with fruit and nuts
- Apple or banana with some type of nut butter
- Yogurt with mixed fruit
- Mix of nuts, seeds, and chopped dried fruit
- Veggies and hummus
- Baked potato and a cup of chili
- Instant grits, boiled egg, and sausage links

### Do you eat more when you do not sleep enough?

A study, by University of Chicago researchers, found that 14 individuals who were sleep-deprived consumed nearly 1000 calories in the early evening compared with 600 calories when they had a full night's sleep. When they were sleep-deprived, they ate twice as much fat. The researchers concluded that sleep deprivation leads to a greater activation of the endocannabinoid system, which is involved in pleasurable eating. (Source: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/why-we-eat-too-much-when-we-dont-sleep-enough-1457979613>) That system is also triggered in marijuana smokers. Ever heard of the munchies?

Another study at Columbia University indicated that sleep-deprived people show a greater neural response in their brains' reward centers, which aligns with the findings above. This study also found that what we eat and when we eat affects the quality and quantity of our sleep. It is a vicious cycle. Sleep too little, eat larger amounts of unhealthy foods, sleep too little, eat more, and gain weight. This can lead to metabolic syndrome and contribute to health problems.

**Can you and I create a virtuous cycle?** Sleep adequate amounts; eat the right amounts of healthful foods; maintain a normal weight.

