

BEING AT YOUR BEST DURING HIGH-STAKES EVENTS

Are you going to an event that you know will make you feel uncomfortable or anxious? Our natural tendency is to not eat in these situations, which only increases the hormone-signaling that this is a stressful event, releasing more adrenaline. To stay in the responsive-cortex brain—and out of the reactive-limbic brain (or lizard brain)—it's helpful to make sure that your brain and body have enough fuel to manage the high-stakes event.

By eating food that contains both carbohydrates and a sufficient amount of protein (as well as healthy fat and some fiber), your brain will be fueled for 2–4 hours. Getting around 20 grams of protein in a meal will last you longer. (*Note: eating more than 20 grams of protein at one time does not extend this benefit.*)

Some examples of high-protein snacks and meals:

Animal-based

- Cottage cheese or Greek yogurt
- Protein shakes and bars (whey, egg, bone broth powders)
- A few slices of deli meat such as chicken or turkey with carrots or pita bread
- Deli salad with chicken or turkey
- Teriyaki chicken kabobs
- Hard-boiled eggs with carrots or pita bread
- Chicken sandwich
- Tacos or burritos (with meat)

Plant-based

- Hummus with carrots, celery, or pita bread
- Baba ghanoush with corn chips
- Nut butter sandwich
- Nut butter with apple slices
- Protein shakes and bars (rice, pea, soy protein powders)
- Tofu salads, sandwiches, or wraps
- Bag of mixed, non-roasted nuts (hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, cashews)
- Tacos or burritos (with beans or tofu)

Here are some visual clues to help you get enough protein:

- 3 oz meat = a deck of playing cards
- 1 c yogurt = a hand holding a tennis ball
- ½ c cooked grain = a small fist
- 1 oz cheese = a thumb
- 1 oz nuts = a golf ball
- 1 tbsp nut butter or nuts = a silver dollar

Examples of high-stakes events:

- ➔ Any situation where you want to be at your best
- ➔ Being around people that stress you out
- ➔ Doing something new
- ➔ Being around highly emotional people
- ➔ Family events
- ➔ Work-related social events
- ➔ Job interviews
- ➔ Test taking
- ➔ Going to therapy
- ➔ Public speaking
- ➔ Going to court