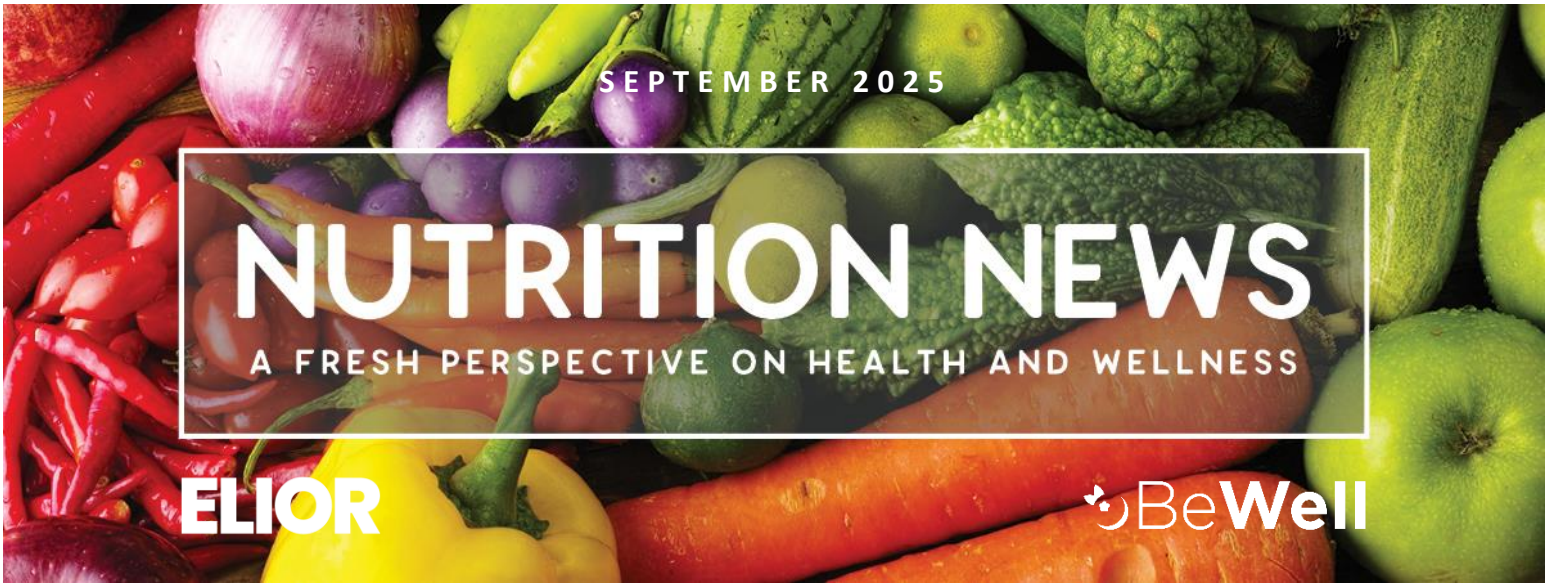


Back to School Fuel: Eat Smarter, Think Sharper

As the new school year kicks off, it's important to start strong—with the right fuel for both your body and your brain. Whether you're heading to class, powering through practice, or working on homework, the food you eat plays a big role in how you feel and perform.

Eating well throughout the day helps you stay sharp, energized, and focused. It supports better memory, steadier moods, and stronger performance—both in the classroom and on the field.

Fueling for Focus: The Basics

To keep your brain working its best and your energy steady from first period to your last activity, try following these simple habits:

- **Eat Balanced Meals:** Include a mix of carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats. Carbs give your brain quick energy, protein keeps you full and focused, and healthy fats support brain function.
- **Don't Skip Meals:** Skipping meals can leave you feeling tired, distracted, and irritable. Eating regularly helps keep your energy and focus on track.
- **Snack Smart:** Go for snacks that combine protein and fiber, like fruit with nuts or yogurt with granola, to avoid energy crashes between meals. (Keep reading for tasty ideas!)
- **Stay Hydrated:** Your brain works better when you're hydrated. Carry a water bottle and sip throughout the day.

Brain-Boosting Foods

Some foods are especially good at supporting brain power. Try including these key nutrients in your meals and snacks.

- **Omega-3s** in foods like salmon, walnuts, chia seeds, and flax seeds.
- **Antioxidants** in foods like berries, leafy greens, nuts, and beans.
- **Choline** in foods like eggs, chicken, potatoes, and yogurt.
- **Complex carbs** in foods like oats, whole grain cereal, sweet potatoes, and fruit.
- **B vitamins** in foods like eggs, milk, and leafy greens.

Smart Snacks to Stay Sharp

Busy school days call for quick snacks that give your brain and body a boost. Try these easy, nourishing options:

- Trail mix with nuts and dried fruit (or even crunchy chickpeas!)
- Whole grain crackers with cheese or hummus
- Apple slices with peanut butter
- Greek yogurt with berries and granola
- Popcorn with a sprinkle of salt

These snacks not only taste great—they also help you stay full and focused! When you fuel your brain, you set yourself up to succeed. This school year, eat well, snack smart, and take charge of your focus, energy, and goals!

Sources: eatright.org & health.harvard.edu

Crunchy Chickpea Trail Mix

Serving size: ½ cup | **Yield:** 5 portions

INGREDIENTS

1.5 cups chickpeas, rinsed & drained
1 Tbsp honey
¾ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp chili powder
Pinch of salt
½ cup raw pumpkin seeds
¼ cup dried cranberries
¼ cup bittersweet chocolate chips
2.5 cups lightly salted popcorn

DIRECTIONS

1. Use a clean towel to pat chickpeas dry, removing outer skins as much as possible. Transfer onto a parchment-lined baking tray.
2. Set baking tray on middle rack of a cold oven and turn oven to 400 degrees F. Roast chickpeas for 10 minutes. Remove and transfer to a large bowl.
3. To the bowl, add honey, cinnamon, chili powder, and salt. Toss to coat.
4. Reduce oven to 350 degrees F. Return mixture to baking sheet and roast for another 25-30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Turn off oven once chickpeas are golden brown. Allow to cool in warm oven for ~2 hours, or until nice and crunchy.
5. Once cool, combine with pumpkin seeds, cranberries, and chocolate chips and toss to evenly distribute. Store in an airtight container for 3-4 days.



Nutrition Information: 220 cal | 70 cal from fat | 8g total fat | 2.5g sat. fat | 0g trans fat | 0 mg cholesterol | 100mg sodium | 31g carbohydrates | 6g fiber | 13g total sugars | 6g protein