From financial worries to work load, we are dealing with ever-increasing stressors in our daily lives that can often blindside healthful habits before you even realize it. Skipping meals or exercise, grabbing fast food or a quick fix from the vending machine, drinking more caffeinated beverages, and losing sleep can all tend to make you more susceptible to fatigue or illness. Use these guides to prioritize yourself and stay healthy!

Eating Well

Eating well and maintaining your good nutrition habits can be difficult during times of stress. With little time to plan or prepare nutritionally sound meals and snacks, old eating habits can creep up on you without much notice. For many people, too much work and limited time means skipping meals, grabbing a quick snack from the vending machine or picking up take-out for dinner. Over time these fast food choices can lead to low intake of much needed vitamins and minerals, low energy and weight gain.

Use these tips to help you to keep eating well:

- **Eat breakfast.** Eating something in the morning, either before leaving for work or when you first arrive, provides you with energy and helps prevent overeating later in the day.

- **Stock up on food.** Keep a stash of nutritious snacks at your desk, such as bananas, oranges, and other fresh fruits, dried fruits and nuts, baked whole wheat crackers, packets of instant oatmeal or soup, or energy bars. Having these types of foods close at hand will help keep you from running to the vending machine when you're struck by afternoon hunger pangs. If you do go to the vending machine, look for the Eat Well Berkeley items, identified with a checkmark (✓) to make a healthier choice.

- **Pack your snacks.** If you bring a cooler to work or if your office has a refrigerator, bring snacks such as individual packs of yogurt or cottage cheese, fresh fruit, and bite-sized vegetables (carrot and celery sticks, pear tomatoes, broccoli, edamame).

- **Pack your lunch.** Preparing and bringing your lunch to work saves you time and money and can help prevent skipping meals. Some lunch ideas include grilled chicken breast with vegetables, sandwiches on whole wheat bread or wraps, homemade or canned soups, or lasagna or spaghetti made with whole wheat pasta. Some frozen meals may be good choices because they are convenient and appropriately portioned meals. If you are watching your sodium intake, be aware that canned soups and frozen meals may contain high amounts of sodium.

- **Cook for the week.** Use the weekends to make a menu plan and prepare foods that can be served for dinner during the week. Prepare larger quantities of entrees; divide into plastic storage packs for dinner over two or three nights, and store in the refrigerator (or freeze for a different week). When it’s time to prepare dinner, heat it the entree and serve with simple side dishes such as a green salad, stir-fry broccoli and pasta.

- **Healthy Meetings.** Encourage the availability of fruits or vegetables, small portions of baked goods and tap water at department meetings and events serving food.
Walk to grab a bite. When you plan to eat out during your workday, include a plan to take a walk as part of getting something to eat. The walk will help you get some exercise, provide a break from work and give you more energy.

Eat 5-A-Day. Eat a minimum of five servings of fresh fruits and vegetables each day. Strive to include fresh fruits and vegetables as part of every meal and snack. They help fill you up and are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber, and low in calories.

When you set simple goals with small changes one at a time, you will find that eating well becomes a natural part of your lifestyle. Try bringing your lunch twice a week or restocking your snack basket every Monday. A high-pressure, fast-paced work environment does not always have to mean skipping meals, or more fast food or trips to the vending machine. You can set small weekly goals to maintain or improve your eating habits and hopefully, you will feel energized and stay healthy.

Staying Healthy During Stressful Times:
Eating Well
Managing Caffeine Use
Managing Stress
Preventing Headaches and Muscle Tension
Sleeping Soundly
Staying Active