

what
to
eat
for
your
job



Say good-bye to the 3 P.M. slump. The right foods will boost stamina and keep you fired up all day

By Jan Sheehan

kids. "I love being a stay-at-home mom, but sometimes it can be exhausting," says Flynn. "I struggle with feeling tired a lot."

What She Eats: Typically, her kids' favorite foods win out. "It's easier than preparing a separate meal," says Flynn. Breakfast is generally cereal with milk and strawberries, blueberries or melon.

Macaroni and cheese or peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches are usually on the lunch menu, along with pretzels and carrots. For dinner, Flynn would like to eat grilled pork chops or baked chicken, but often caters to her kids' taste buds. So she dines on breaded meat dishes or cheesy chicken casseroles served with corn.

To rev her engines, Flynn downs four cups of coffee in the morning and a glass of soda later in the day. Between-meal snacks are often popsicles, popcorn, crackers or yogurt.

Diet Diagnosis: Although Flynn has some balance in her diet with cereal, fruit, poultry and veggies, her kids' favorite foods are loaded with fat.

Fatty foods divert blood to the stomach because they take a long time to digest, which could be making Flynn feel sluggish. She can slowly introduce some lighter (*continued*) choices, such as grilled chicken and vegetables, which will also help her children learn healthy habits. "She's a role model, so it's important to set a good example," says Zanecosky.

Iron deficiency could be another reason for Flynn's exhaustion. Red meats are particularly good sources of iron, as are eggs, beans and nuts.

Although the caffeine from soda and coffee may give Flynn a brief energy burst, it's a diuretic and may leave her feeling tired and dehydrated. She should gradually cut back on caffeine and up her water intake.

Perfect Peak-Performance Meal: Stir-fried beef and veggies served over rice; salad with a hard-boiled egg and low-fat dressing; skim milk and a fresh fruit medley for dessert.

**NEVER-ENDING NIGHT SHIFT:
THE NURSE**

Jaimi Gray, thirty-four, married.

Body Stats: five-five, 135 pounds

Personal Weight Goals: "I could probably stand to lose three to five pounds, but it's not a big concern."

Job Demands: An emergency-room nurse at a major hospital in Denver,

Gray works twelve-hour shifts three days in a row. She's often on her feet attending to patients, assisting doctors, pushing wheelchairs and dealing with medical traumas from seven P.M. until seven A.M. "I usually hit the door

running and don't sit down until my shift is over," says Gray.

What She Eats: To prepare for long nights on the job, Gray has a big dinner—usually red meat or chicken, a green salad, vegetables and a baked potato or pasta.

Because the hospital cafeteria and deli are closed at night, she brings dinner leftovers, sandwiches and fruit to eat at work. But grazing on junk food, such as potato chips and chocolate, usually wins out. "When things get crazy, my good intentions go out the window," she says. She also drinks two or three cans of soda.

Breakfast, her last meal before hitting the sheets, is typically toast or a bagel with some fruit.

Diet Diagnosis: Women who work on their feet for long hours—nurses, waitresses, mail carriers, store clerks—need plenty of fuel.

Eating a balanced meal before work scores bonus points—a serving of protein has staying power, so Gray won't feel hungry for several hours.

However, Gray's chaotic work environment is likely leading her to nosh on junk food. "Many of us make poor food choices when we're stressed," Zanecosky says. Candy and

Whether you're a stay-at-home mom or a nine-to-seven executive, smart food choices can help power you through your next presentation or a full-scale toddler meltdown. Eating well on the job can be surprisingly simple, says Althea Zanecosky, R.D., a Philadelphia-based spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. To learn how, check out these diet makeovers.

**PARENTING POWER:
THE STAY-AT-HOME MOM**

Barbara Flynn, thirty-four, married with a two-year-old daughter and four-year-old son.

Body Stats: five-three, 118 pounds

Personal Weight Goals: "I'm not overweight. But I'd like to tone up."

Job Demands: Because Flynn's husband, the owner of a paving business in the Detroit area, works long hours, she is usually home alone with the

sugary soda—which produce an energy spike, then a letdown—could be causing her to crash. Instead, Gray can keep her energy level up for her twelve-hour marathon by eating small amounts of complex carbohydrates every few hours. A sandwich sliced into small triangles and fortified cereal stashed in a plastic bag are easy snacks to munch on the run. Drinking water will help her fight fatigue.

Perfect Peak-Performance Meals: Carbohydrate-rich mini meals such as orange juice and half a sandwich; cheese and crackers with fruit yogurt; cereal and a banana.

ALWAYS ON THE GO: THE AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR

Hope Carter-Snoop, thirty-six, married with a seven-month-old son and a two-year-old daughter.

Body Stats: five-three, 128 pounds

Personal Weight Goals: "I'm very muscular, so I look good at my current weight. But I'd like to get to one hundred and twenty."

Job Demands: A former National Aerobics Champion, Carter-Snoop teaches aerobics and works as a personal trainer at a YMCA in Orlando, Florida. An average day includes two 90-minute aerobics classes and three personal training sessions.

What She Eats: Because she likes variety, Carter-Snoop's breakfast fare changes daily. Favorites include cereal with milk, oatmeal with a spoonful of peanut butter, yogurt with fruit, a bagel with cream cheese, or eggs and toast. She rarely has juice, but always drinks at least one cup of coffee or tea.

Lunch varies, but is often turkey or chicken with pickles and fruit. She never eats before teaching to avoid cramps or an upset stomach.

But sometimes she feels tired in the middle of class.

Carter-Snoop's big meal of the day is dinner, where she often tries out recipes gleaned from TV cooking shows. A typical supper consists of a meat or fish entrée, a large green salad, sautéed mixed vegetables (usually zucchini, carrots and green beans), seasonal fruit (like

strawberries or melon) and a glass of red or white wine.

About three nights a week, she has a bowl of chocolate-chip ice cream for dessert. Her favorite between-meal treat is six or seven Oreos (continued) dipped in milk. "I'll do that a couple of times a week when I just really need something to make me feel good," she says. To prevent dehydration, she drinks about ten glasses of water a day.

Diet Diagnosis: With such a physically demanding job, Carter-Snoop needs to load up on carbohydrates. "Women who are aerobics instructors, athletes or dancers require more carbohydrates than the average person to refuel their exercising muscles," Zanecosky says.

While Carter-Snoop gets plenty of energy-fueling carbs at breakfast and lunch, she should add some bread or pasta to her evening meal. Complex carbohydrates (grains, starch, vegetables) work slowly to replenish energy reserves (simple carbohydrates, such as fruits, milk and sugar, provide quick bursts of energy). Starchy vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes would also be good choices.

To prevent mid-workout energy lapses, Carter-Snoop should have a glass of orange juice or a banana shortly before class. Both are simple carbohydrates that are easily absorbed and shouldn't cause cramping.

Carter-Snoop's rigorous exercise routine is also giving her bones a workout, Zanecosky says. She can sneak extra calcium into her diet by adding milk to her coffee or tea. Because her weight is healthy, her ice-cream and cookies-and-milk treats pose no problem. "It's important to have a few snacks that you really love," Zanecosky says.

Although Carter-Snoop guzzles ten glasses of water a day, she's still not getting enough. Athletes who exercise two hours or more per day need to drink a gallon of water—about sixteen 8-ounce glasses.

Perfect Peak-Performance Meal: Spaghetti and meatballs; a tossed salad with carrots; and for dessert, ice cream with fruit.

MENTAL MAVEN: THE ATTORNEY

Stacy D. Phillips, forty-two, married with a six-year-old daughter and an eleven-year-old son.

Body Stats: five-three, 110 pounds

Personal Weight Goals: "I'd like to drop a few pounds. But when I lose too much weight, people say I look too thin."

Job Demands: A managing partner of a law firm in Century City, California, Phillips spends her fourteen-hour days mapping out legal strategies, writing court documents, arguing cases before judges and meeting with clients.

She also serves on several boards for nonprofit groups.

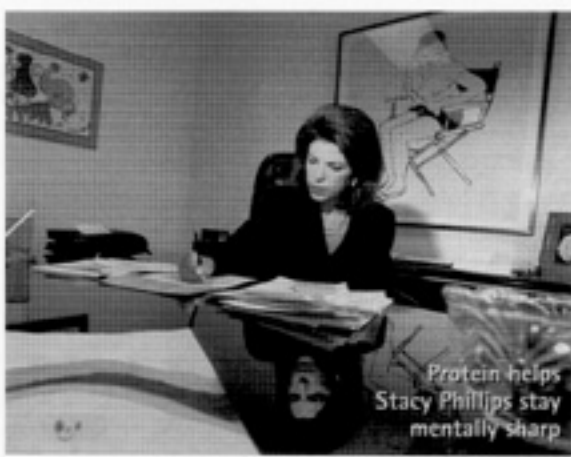
What She Eats: Because Phillips often meets with clients over breakfast or lunch, she eats most of her meals out. Breakfast is usually sliced tomatoes and scrambled eggs without salt, butter or oil. She doesn't like yogurt or milk, but will occasionally nibble on cottage cheese.

She often orders fish with vegetables or a salad for lunch, and steers clear of pasta because it makes her sleepy. Snacks are usually fruit or protein bars, but on bad days, Phillips turns to her secret stash of miniature Milky Ways.

For dinner, she sometimes has potatoes or rice, and usually serves up another high-protein main dish—fish, chicken or red meat—with more greens. Her strict diet includes a ban on coffee and soda. Instead, she drinks two to eight glasses of water every day.

Diet Diagnosis: Phillips is already at a healthy weight and shouldn't try to drop pounds. Her extremely high-protein diet is a plus for mental focus and concentration. "Protein foods like meat, chicken, fish and eggs help to stimulate alertness and are important for people who are thinkers throughout the day," Zanecosky says. Fish is especially beneficial: Research shows that varieties rich in omega-3 fatty acids (tuna, salmon, trout, halibut, mackerel and sardines) help maintain healthy brain cells.

However, Phillips needs to start eating carbohydrates to balance her diet. "Since she's worried that starches may make her sleepy, she can have them with dinner when she finally winds down," Zanecosky says. High-protein diets also often lack other nutrients, putting people at risk for dehydration and possible kidney problems.



Her diet also lacks foods high in B vitamins, such as beans and whole grains, which play a crucial role in brain health, and help keep nerve impulses firing fast.

Her cottage-cheese snack doesn't give her enough calcium—she needs to add some milk, yogurt and cheese. Although Phillips takes supplements, calcium works best when it comes from dairy products enriched with vitamin D, which aids absorption. A decaf latte on the way to work would be an easy way to add a serving of milk each day.

Perfect Peak-Performance Meal: Grilled salmon with whole-grain rice; asparagus; a three-bean salad topped with grated Parmesan cheese; plus nonfat frozen yogurt with fresh strawberries for dessert. ■

Ladies' Home Journal has teamed up with **iVillage.com** to bring you more health information. To calculate your daily fat, protein and calorie needs, go to www.allhealth.com/lhj