

BECOME A CRISIS ATHLETE™

RETHINK AND REIMAGINE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT RESILIENCE.
LEAD WITH YOUR BRAIN - THE CRISIS ATHLETE™ WAY.

EAT HEALTHY. Yes. Really. This is critical. We often see (and have ourselves consumed) sugary snacks, the three-decade-shelf-life processed foods, and enough coffee to fill swimming pools in our stints in operations centers in the countless crises we have responded to. But why is this so important, and **WHY NOW?** Your brain needs it. The average brain weighs only 3 lbs./1.36 kgs, yet it consumes 20% of the body's energy. Good food = healthy brain fuel. **YOUR GUT IS OFTEN CALLED THE "SECOND BRAIN"** because it is able to operate on its own and has a direct neural communication pathway to your actual brain. This second brain, called the enteric nervous system (ENS) is transforming how medicine understands the connection between digestion, mood, and how we think.

UNDERSTAND YOUR BRAIN



The gut microbiome weighs more than our brains (about 2 kgs), and may have as much influence over our bodies. New findings about the ENS also highlight how people with digestive problems have a higher incidence of depression, anxiety, and other disorders.

Do you want to stay healthy, think clearly, and feel good? **PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU'RE EATING.** We know, we know... you've heard it all before, and it's easier said than done. Start by making small changes today.

STRATEGY 4: FUEL YOUR BODY, FUEL YOUR BRAIN

DRINK WATER

1

Your brain is composed of 70% water. Water is needed for digestion, absorption, transporting nutrients, and eliminating toxins. Instead of grabbing coffee or soda, swap one cup/can for some water. Begin by adding one extra glass of water to your routine every few days. Or keep a reusable water bottle that is at least 24oz/700mL near you. Studies show you can increase your water intake simply by having it more accessible. **Added bonus: It's good for the planet, too.**

CHOOSE VARIETY

2

For decades, the definition of "bad" food has changed: sugar, carbs, fat, etc. Rather than labeling "bad food" the enemy, focus on adding a variety of foods to your diet. Variety means fruit, vegetables, meat, seafood, legumes, whole grain, healthy fats, and nuts. Eating a variety of food will allow you to get a variety of nutrients.

PLAN AND PACK
YOUR LUNCH/SNACKS

3

Commit to adding some veggies or fruit to your meals. If you don't have time to make yourself a balanced meal, pack healthy snacks. Example: Apple, nuts/nut butter, hard boiled egg, carrots, whole wheat bread. Having a variety of healthy ready-to-snack options available helps avoid processed meals when you're on the go.

PLANNING AT WORK

4

Still in an Ops Center? Ask your Logistics Section (or equivalent) to partner with local restaurants to bring in some brain power food. Maybe even issue a creative challenge to restaurants for some "brain power meals" and think about how to extend that outward into community meal delivery services. Also, see if you can influence the types of snacks offered at work.

Share your ideas for healthy snacks, ways to eat healthier on the run, and/or incorporating healthful eating into communities during crisis response at [#IAEMStrong](#), [#CrisisAthlete](#).



YOU ARE NOT ALONE — WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER.

