



BRAIN FOOD . . . Ben Jennings tucks into a snack during a study session.

Photo: NATASHA PAES

# It's crunchy time

By BEN BROAD

Eating a healthy breakfast is important but perhaps never more so than on days when you are relying on your powers of concentration.

Whether it be during exam time – many year 12 students in NSW are sitting the most important tests of their young lives – or in everyday worklife, getting the correct amounts of study, sleep and, importantly, food, is crucial.

Dietitians and nutritionists agree that a healthy and nutritious diet is most beneficial.

Dietitian Sue Radd said a diet was crucial during study times.

"A healthy diet is an essential part of exam preparation and students need to make every mouthful count," Ms Radd said. "A diet of junk food and coffee won't supply the fuel to feed your brain." Ms Radd recommended lighter meals

throughout the day but stressed it was important to get breakfast right.

"The right sort of breakfast would be something that includes wholegrain," she said. "Also, maybe some light fruit and some low-fat milk or soy milk, things that release the sugars more slowly throughout the day."

Ben Jennings, a year 12 student at Kellyville's William Clarke College, said he ate breakfast each day but was not more conscious of what he ate during exam time.

"I generally have an *Up and Go* (a Weet Bix and milk drink)," he said. "I tend not to eat that much though."

Ben said he generally ate nutritious meals although his snacks were often less healthy.

"I just eat whenever I'm hungry," he said. "I might eat a little bit extra when I'm studying I guess, because walk-

ing to the cupboard is a break from the books."

Castle Hill student Carly Pedersen said she studied for up to eight hours a day and realised the need to ingest good food.

She said her lunch was "probably not that good" for her but some of her friends took more care when deciding what to eat during study times.

"I've got a couple of friends who have sushi, which isn't really that fishy, but they've said it's good brain food."

Fellow Castle Hill High student Mathew Shurley said he nearly always skipped breakfast.

"It doesn't sit that well with me," Mathew said. "I have had breakfast a couple of days because I've had exams and I thought I might need a bit of extra energy. I probably should eat it each day."