
Healthy Snacking

A common myth about snacking is that it's not good for you. This might be true if you're helping yourself to candy, chips, or other junk foods throughout the day. But healthy snacking is possible. It's what you eat and how much you eat that matters.



How to make snacks work for you

The key to healthy snacking is to make smart choices about what you're eating. Snacks should come from one or more of the following food groups:

- Grains
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Dairy
- Protein

They should also be high in nutrients, and low in fat, added sugar, and salt. When snacking, it's also important to watch how much you're eating. A snack should be treated as a very small meal. The point is to eat just enough to take the edge off your hunger, not to eat until you're full.

Pack snacks ahead of time

The body's fuel runs out within several hours after eating a meal. If you don't eat, you'll feel your energy level drop. You may also notice that you're less focused and alert. Try

packing snacks to bring with you to work, school, or wherever your busy schedule takes you. Otherwise, you'll end up relying on snacks from vending machines or convenience stores that are often high in fat and added sugars and low in nutrients.

Pick your snacks wisely

Low-fat choices to include:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole-wheat bagel with low-fat cream cheese
- Fat-free or low-fat muffin
- Pretzels
- Rice cakes
- Low-fat granola bars
- Whole-grain crackers and graham crackers
- Low-fat and unsalted microwave popcorn

High-fat choices to pass up:

- Danish and donuts
- Snack cakes and cupcakes
- Chips and crackers
- Chocolate bars
- Cream-filled cookies
- Ready-made popcorn

Snacks for anytime, anywhere

In addition to some of the snacks mentioned above, other good packable snacks include:

- Single-serving boxes of dry and unsweetened cereal
- Fresh fruit (oranges, pears, grapes, and apples all travel well)
- Dried fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Vegetable sticks or baby carrots
- Mini-boxes of raisins
- Unsweetened juice boxes

-
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
 - Peanut butter

Snack supplies for home and work

- Raw vegetables
- Hummus
- Guacamole
- Fresh fruits
- Fat-free or low-fat yogurt
- Unsweetened applesauce or canned fruit
- Low-fat cheese slices or string cheese
- Fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese
- Whole-wheat tortillas
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Peanut butter
- Slices of lean turkey or chicken