



Snacks can be an important part of a healthful diet. Well-chosen snacks can help you manage your weight, hunger, health, and energy. Snacks can help you gain or lose weight. Energy dense snacks can help you eat more in a day for weight gain. Eating several small healthy snacks between meals helps with weight loss by keeping cravings down and preventing excessive hunger that may lead to overeating. Snacks can help you meet healthful guidelines for grain, vegetable, fruit, calcium and protein intake. Snacks keep you going when you are dragging - and nutritious snacks keep you going longer. Small, wisely chosen snacks between meals promote good health and add pleasure to life. Snack with variety, balance and moderation in mind. The following tips can make between-meal eating a nutritious, enjoyable part of your eating style!

Work snacks into your diet – Rather than considering them as "extras," choose snacks that contribute to your calorie and nutrient needs. Snack on foods that compliment your meals and add variety to your diet. For instance, if you mainly eat meats and starch at meals, snack on fruits, vegetables, and milk, cheese, or yogurt.

Match snacks to your calorie needs and weight goals – If your goal is weight maintenance or weight loss, you may want to consume nutrient dense snacks that are between 100-200 calories. If you are a physically active person, however, or a person looking to gain weight, you may need to consume nutrient dense snacks that contain between 200-400 calories.

Watch your snack portions – Snack portions are smaller than meal portions. Snacks shouldn't "fill you up" but rather help you to be "not hungry." Although calorie level depends on your activity level and weight goals, snacks should generally not contain more than 500 calories (this would be similar to a meal).

Snack when you're hungry – Skip the urge to nibble in response to non-hunger eating impulses such as boredom, frustration, or stress. "Nourish" stress or boredom with a walk instead of a donut.

Snack consciously – Eat when you snack, relax when you watch TV, and study when you are studying. Don't mix snacking with other activities. Snacking absentmindedly, while doing other things, leads to overeating.

Plan ahead for smart snacking – Keep a variety of tasty, nutritious, ready-to-eat snacks on hand at home, work, or wherever you need a light bite to take the edge off hunger. That way you won't be limited to snacks from vending machines, fast-food restaurants, or convenience stores. You may even consider purchasing a small refrigerator for your dorm room or office.

GO ANYWHERE SNACKS

Refrigerator snacks - Stock your refrigerator with ready-to-go healthy snacks: low fat dairy (yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, milk, chocolate or vanilla flavored soymilk), lean deli meats, fruit juice, ready-to-eat fruit, and fresh vegetable sticks, baby carrots or baby (cherry) tomatoes, spiced applesauce.

Office snacks - Prepare for unscheduled meetings and deadlines by stashing nutritious snacks in your office or workplace: instant soup, pretzels dipped in mustard, whole-grain cereal, mini cans of water-packed tuna, boxes of raisins, instant oatmeal, dried fruit or single serve fruit cups, or whole-wheat crackers.

Microwave snacks - Heat single-serving soups. Make instant pizza by topping a whole-grain bagel or English muffin with tomato sauce and cheese. Make hot bean dip with refried beans, salsa, and mild green chilies, and serve with baked tortilla chips. Melt cheddar cheese on a microwaved baked potato or a frozen soft pretzel. Microwave a sweet potato and top with low fat sour cream.

Sweet snacks - Try these goodies: pudding with vanilla wafers, oatmeal-raisin cookies, fig bars, graham crackers or rice cakes with peanut butter, hot chocolate, frozen yogurt, dried fruit, raisin toast, frozen fruit bars, whole fruit sorbet, homemade low-fat bran muffins, whole grain toast with peanut butter and sliced bananas, and sugar-free Jell-O made with fresh fruit and marshmallows.

Traveling snacks - Take along on trips or events: canned or boxed juice, crackers and cheese or peanut butter, string cheese, pretzels, air-popped or light microwave popcorn, fresh fruit, dried fruit, cereal-raisin-nut trail mixes, granola bars, single serve boxed soy milk.

SNACK IDEAS

It is mid afternoon, you feel drained and you reach for a “pick-me-up” for some re-found energy. Or you are studying for an exam and you forgot to eat lunch and now its 9:30 p.m. and you are starving – but you have few snacking options. Often you reach for convenient snacks like candy bars, soda, and chips. Plan ahead and have healthy snacks at home or bring a snack from home when you are out studying (keep small containers and plastic baggies handy for packing snacks)! Try some of the snacks mentioned below.

- One-half of a cantaloupe filled with ½ cup of fat-free yogurt
- A frozen fruit bar and sparkling water
- One low-fat granola bar and a small banana
- A fruit smoothie
- Air-popped popcorn topped with Italian seasonings and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese
- Baked tortilla chips and salsa
- One orange and six animal crackers
- One-half cup of frozen yogurt and a small banana
- Low-fat hummus and pita wedges
- Celery stuffed with low-fat bean dip
- Cinnamon bagel chips and ½ cup fat-free cottage cheese
- Fat-free pretzel stick and 1%, skim or soymilk with chocolate syrup
- One-half cup couscous topped with tomato sauce and ½ teaspoon of Parmesan cheese
- Dried fruit such as apricots, apple rings, or a small box of raisins and a low-fat string cheese stick
- Reduced sodium vegetable juice and two white cheddar popcorn cakes
- Ready-to-eat whole grain cereal with soymilk
- A tortilla rolled up with vegetarian fat-free refried beans and a sprinkle of Mexican blend cheese (heat in the microwave to melt the cheese)
- Apple slices and homemade apple dip
- Ants on a log: celery stick with peanut butter spread in the center, topped with raisins
- Raw sweet potato sticks instead of carrot sticks (carrots sticks are good also!)
- Two Graham cracker sheets with one tablespoon reduced-fat peanut butter
- One medium size low-fat muffin with a juice box or chocolate milk box

ONE FOOD-GROUP SNACKS

- Baked tortilla chips
- Pretzels
- Spiced applesauce
- Soft pretzel
- Salsa
- Angel food cake
- Saltines
- Bagel with fruit preserves
- Frozen yogurt
- Fruit-yogurt shake
- Vanilla wafers
- Individual boxes of unsweetened cereal

TWO FOOD-GROUP SNACKS

- Whole-grain cereal and milk
- Fruit smoothie (fruit or juice, blended with milk or yogurt)
- Yogurt and fresh fruit
- Peanut butter on whole-wheat crackers
- Pita bread and hummus
- Apple or pear slices topped with cheese
- Bagel chips and salsa
- Dried cranberry and peanut mix
- Flaked tuna and chopped celery, tossed with low-fat mayonnaise
- Raw vegetables with a cottage cheese dip
- Light microwave popcorn and fruit juice
- Quesadilla (soft tortilla with cheese – folded and heated)
- Pita bread studded with lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and low-fat dressing

MORE SNACK IDEAS – Nutritious snacks containing 200-400 calories

- Dried unsweetened apples (½ cup) mixed with almonds (¼ cup) and oat squares cereal (½ cup)
- Water packed light tuna (½ a can) tossed with chopped celery (1 stalk) and light mayonnaise (1 Tbsp.)
- Baby carrots (20 medium carrots) with 1% fat cottage cheese (½ cup) and fat-free ranch dressing (2 Tbsp.)
- Quesadilla: corn tortillas (2 tortillas) with light cheddar cheese (2 oz.) cooked using cooking spray
- Whole-wheat pita pocket (64 grams) stuffed with tomato (½ medium tomato), light cheddar cheese (2 oz.), and fat-free ranch dressing (2 Tbsp.)

- Reduced fat peanut butter (3 Tbsp.) on celery sticks (2 stalks) topped with raisins (20 raisins) and grated carrots (¼ cup)
- Air-popped popcorn (2 cups) mixed with diced dry apricots (½ cup) and 10 pretzel twists (60 grams)
- Fruit smoothie: blend together frozen pineapple (1 cup), non-fat tropical yogurt (8 oz.), coconut extract and water as needed
- Banana (1 medium) dipped in non-fat yogurt (4 oz.) and honey-nut Cheerios (½ cup)
- Reduce fat peanut butter (2 Tbsp.) on rye crisp bread (4 wafers)
- Whole-wheat pita pocket (64 grams) and hummus (¼ cup)
- Apple with light cheddar cheese or a pear with brie cheese (1 fruit and 2 oz. cheese)
- Microwaved baked potato (1 medium) topped with salsa (½ cup) and reduced fat sour cream (2 Tbsp.)

BRAND NAME SNACK IDEAS - nutritious snacks containing 100-200 calories

- Kashi GoLean® crunchy bar
- 15 Kashi TLC® crackers and 1 Kraft American 2% Milk Single
- All Bran® breakfast bars
- Skinny Cow® fat-free ice cream bars
- Dannon Light and Fit Smoothie® (7 fluid oz.) and ½ cup strawberries
- General Mills Nature Valley Crunchy Granola Bars® (2 bars) – all varieties
- V8 100% vegetable juice® or V8 splash juice® (16 fluid oz.)
- Nabisco Fig Newtons, reduced fat and regular (2 bars)
- Slim Fast Snack Bars® – all varieties
- Nabisco Reduced Fat Triscuits® (7 crackers) and Kraft-String-ums string cheese
- Blue Bunny Lite 85 yogurt®
- McDonalds Apple Dippers with Low Fat Caramel Dip®
- Nabisco 100 calorie packs – all varieties
- Skippy Trail Mix Triple Nut Bars®
- Campbell's Soup at Hand® – all varieties
- Mott's Original or Cinnamon Applesauce®
- Del Monte Mixed Fruit in plastic cups®

For more information and recipes, check out these websites:

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/> (The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Information Center)

<http://eat.epicurious.com/> (Recipes)

<http://www.betterhomesandgardens.com/> (Better Homes and Gardens - food section: recipes, cooking tolls and guides)

References

The American Dietetic Association's Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, by Roberta Larson Duyff, MS, RD, CFCS. (3rd edition). 2006.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>