
Healthy Snacks for Adults

Healthy snacking can be part of healthy eating. While not everyone needs or wants to snack in between meals, healthy snacking can help you get all the nutrients you need to stay healthy and feel energized.

Healthy snacking may help improve blood cholesterol levels and keep your blood glucose (sugar) levels stable throughout the day. This can help curb your feeling of hunger between meals.

This fact sheet provides tips on how to choose and prepare snacks and how to be mindful when you are snacking.



Steps you can take

Choose and prepare healthy snack foods

- Keep a variety of healthy, ready-to-eat snacks on hand by planning ahead to have snacks available. This includes:
 - Add healthy snack items to your weekly grocery list.
 - Examples are fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruit, eggs, unsalted nuts and seeds, hummus, lower fat yogurt and cheese and whole grain breads and crackers.
- Rinse, peel, cut and store vegetables such as bell peppers, broccoli, carrots, celery and cucumber and place in a container in the fridge.
- Rinse and portion fruit such as blueberries, grapes and strawberries and cut-up cantaloupe and pineapple into small containers and store in the fridge.
- Make batches of homemade muffins and granola bars and store them in the freezer in single use bags or containers.
- Make your own trail mix with unsalted nuts such as almonds, cashews, peanuts and walnuts, seeds such as pumpkin and sunflower seeds and dried fruit such as raisins, apricots and cranberries.
- Boil a batch of hard boiled eggs and store them in the fridge.
- After meals, portion leftover meals into small containers and store in the fridge or freezer.

- Buy small packages of food or portion out amounts from larger packages into small bags or containers to grab quickly. This helps to avoid eating directly from a large container or bag.
- Keep a thermos, insulated bag or freezer ice packs available to pack a snack when you know you won't be able to eat it for a few hours.

Be mindful when eating snacks

- Learn to recognize true hunger and fullness. Your body's signals, smell and access to food and your emotional state can affect your hunger.
- Aim to snack only when you are hungry. Not when you are bored, tired, upset or stressed or possibly thirsty.
- Eat slowly to give yourself time to digest your food to help you stop eating when you are full.
- Move to another area or do another activity if you are eating because there is food around you, not because you are hungry.
- Stay well hydrated. Choose water often and add a slice of lemon, lime or cucumber to add flavour. Lower fat milk, fortified soy beverage, plain tea, coffee or sugar-free beverages are also good choices.
- Try to keep active or doing other things if you find you are snacking a lot. Examples include walking, reading a book, meditating, calling a friend, knitting, writing in a journal or listening to music.
- Avoid snacking while watching TV, using electronics, reading or driving. These distractions can often lead to overeating.
- Save highly salted, sweetened and high-fat foods such as chips, desserts and sugar-sweetened beverages for special occasions. These foods are higher in calories, fat, sugar, or sodium and lower in fibre.

Healthy Snack Ideas

Here are some healthy snack ideas. Some are quick, 'grab and go' type snacks and some take some preparation:

- Piece of fresh fruit such as a banana, orange, pear or plum and a slice of lower fat cheese
- Bowl of leftover soup or stew with a whole wheat roll
- Air-popped or low-fat microwave popcorn and apple slices

- Handful of low salt pretzels or roasted chickpeas and some cucumber rounds
- Whole grain crackers or melba toast with nut butter or lower fat cheese and carrot sticks
- Homemade fruit smoothie or lassi made with lower fat milk or fortified soy beverage and fresh or frozen berries
- Half a whole wheat pita filled with hummus and bell pepper strips
- A hard-boiled egg or canned tuna (packed in water or broth) with celery sticks
- Lower fat cottage cheese or bocconcini (mozzarella cheese balls) with tomato slices, basil and balsamic vinegar
- Homemade fruit salad made with blueberries, grapes, raspberries and strawberries or a canned fruit cup (packed in water or its own juice) and a homemade granola bar
- Whole grain tortilla chips with fresh salsa or guacamole
- Whole wheat English muffin with melted lower fat cheese and pear slices
- Handful of homemade trail mix and a piece of fresh fruit
- Small serving of dried plantain or banana chips with cut up vegetables
- Hot oats or cold whole grain cereal with lower fat milk or fortified soy beverage and topped with raisins
- Lower fat milk or chocolate milk and a banana
- Unsweetened applesauce with a small bran muffin
- Yogurt parfait made with lower fat yogurt layered with fresh berries and topped with granola
- Broccoli pieces with hummus, tzatziki or bean dip
- Spinach leaves topped with orange segments or strawberries and toasted sliced almonds

Tips on Reading Food Labels

Use the food labels on packaged foods to help you make healthier choices.

- Look for the Nutrition Facts table on the food label. It will tell you the serving size and the amount of calories, total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium and fibre in each serving.
- Use the percent Daily Value (% DV) to compare foods. Choose products that are lower in sodium, sugar or saturated fat.
 - The % DV column in the Nutrition Facts table shows you if a specific amount of food has a little or a lot of a nutrient.
 - 5% DV or less is a little and 15% DV or more is a lot of the nutrient
 - Choose foods with a lower % DV of fat, saturated, cholesterol and sodium. Choose foods with a higher % DV of fibre, vitamins A and C, calcium and iron.



Additional Resources

- Health Canada: Healthy Snacks - <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/healthy-snacks/>
- Health Guide Recipes: Snacks - <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/recipes/#Snacks>

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