

Choosing Healthy Snacks

It's back to school time and kids are coming home hungry but dinner isn't ready for another couple hours. What can you give them that won't ruin their appetite and is not full of sugar, fat and calories? Keep these snacks and tips in mind for yourself as well when you feel the urge to run to the vending machine or eat while you cook dinner. Snacks are a great way to get extra nutrients in and minimize overeating at meals.

What are some healthy snacks that we could try?

For most healthy people, these snacks are good choices:

- String cheese and whole-grain crackers
- Nonfat yogurt mixed with fresh fruit and granola
- Whole grain low sugar cereal and milk
- Cut-up fruit or vegetables with yogurt dip
- Whole-wheat pita filled with hummus
- Low-fat corn chips with salsa
- Fat-free tortilla filled with turkey, cheese, and vegetables
- Half of a bagel topped with peanut butter and banana slices
- Low-fat popcorn with grated Parmesan cheese sprinkled on top
- Fat-free pudding cup (try frozen also)
- Handful of nuts mixed with a few chocolate chips
- Low-fat milk and two or three gingersnap cookies
- Pretzels dipped in low-fat ranch dressing
- Low-fat cottage cheese topped with diced pepper and tomato
- Frozen waffle topped with unsweetened applesauce
- Low-sodium tomato soup made with low-fat milk and a handful of oyster crackers
- Low-sodium tuna salad on whole-wheat toast
- Small salad topped with grilled chicken
- One slice of thin-crust pizza topped with plenty of vegetables
- See additional pages for some healthy snack recipes



Is snacking bad for me? Will it make me gain weight?

No! Snacking is great to help you feel more energetic. The trick is to only snack when you are truly hungry and to **choose your snacks wisely**. Most people need to eat something every 4 hours to keep their blood sugar levels steady, energy levels up, and to help stay focused.

Will snacking help me eat less at mealtimes?

It might. It takes 20 minutes for your brain to register that you are full after eating. This is why a small snack about 20 minutes before mealtimes could lead to you eating less during a meal.

How many calories should a snack contain?

If you will eat your next meal within 1–2 hours, you should choose a snack with 50–100 calories. If you will not have your next meal for more than 2 hours, aim for 100-200 calories.

What foods are best for snacks?

Think of snacks as extra nutritional insurance. Very few people get all of the whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and dairy products that they should from their meals. Snacks are a way to make up for these deficits. Snacks that contain protein and/or fiber will keep you full for a longer period of time. No one would say, "My diet is really lacking in cookies, so I better eat a few."

Homemade Granola Bars

Ingredients:

1 C Old-fashioned rolled oats
½ C chopped or slivered nuts
2 Tbsp seeds
1 C unsweetened whole-grain puffed cereal
1 C dried fruit
¼ C creamy nut butter
1 Tbsp sugar
¼ C honey or brown rice syrup
½ tsp vanilla extract
1/8 tsp salt



Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat an 8" square pan with cooking spray.

Spread oats, nuts, and seeds on a large, rimmed baking sheet. Bake until the oats are lightly toasted and the nuts are fragrant, shaking the pan halfway through, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Add cereal and dried fruit; toss to combine.

Combine nut butter, sugar, honey or syrup, vanilla and salt in a small saucepan. Heat over medium-low, stirring frequently, until the mixture bubbles lightly, about 2 to 5 minutes. Immediately pour the nut butter/syrup mixture over the dry ingredients and mix with a spoon or spatula until no dry spots remain. Transfer to the prepared pan.

Lightly coat your hands with cooking spray and press the mixture down firmly to make an even layer (wait until the mixture cools slightly if necessary). Refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes; cut into 8 bars.

Average nutrition: 225 calories, 10 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 0 g trans-fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 70 mg sodium, 32 g total carb, 4 g fiber, 18 g sugar, 5.5 g protein. *Nutritional information depends on actual ingredients included. This is only an estimated value.*

TIPS: *For the healthiest bars, look for unsalted nuts and unsweetened dried fruits. If you don't have a nut chopper available, put the nuts in a sealed baggie, squeeze out the air, and gently pound the nuts with the flat side of a meat tenderizer. Chop or slice the larger dried fruits into pea-sized pieces so the granola bars don't crumble apart. Unsweetened, puffed whole-grain cereals can be found in the cereal section of the health foods area. Depending on whether you desire a honey flavor or a neutral flavor for your bars, choose a thick syrup that will match your bar's theme. If your experiment makes for crumbly bars instead of solid stick bars, don't be ashamed; you've just designed your own granola.*

Trail Corn

Makes 4 servings (about 1 ¼ cup each)

Ingredients:

4 cups air-popped popcorn
½ c high-fiber, low-sugar cereal squares (ex: Quaker Oatmeal Squares)
½ c dried red fruit (ex: dried cherries, cranberries)
2 T mini dark chocolate chips



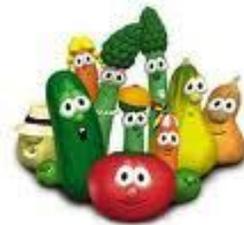
Directions:

Place 1 cup popcorn into each of 4 sandwich-sized plastic bags, followed by 2 tbsp cereal, 2 tbsp dried fruit, and ½ tbsp chocolate chips. Shake each bag to distribute the ingredients evenly and seal. Store for up to three days.

Per serving: 152 calories, 3g protein, 29g carbohydrates, 3g fat, 1g saturated, 0mg cholesterol, 4g fiber, 37mg sodium.

Veggie Dip

1-6 oz individual low fat plain Greek yogurt
1 cup light mayo
1 ½ Tbsp Dill weed seasoning
1 tsp seasoning salt (or Mrs. Dash)
1 tsp onion powder



Mix all ingredients and refrigerate at least one hour before serving.

Nutrition Facts (Per 1 tbsp): 10 Calories, 0.5 g fat, 1 g Carbohydrate, 0.5 g protein

Fruit Dip

1-6 ounce individual light yogurt**
1 cup fat free whipped topping
Mix all ingredients, keep refrigerated until serving.

**Note: Raspberry, Strawberry, and Lemon flavors work well, but feel free to experiment with other flavors you enjoy!

Nutrition Facts (Per 1 tbsp): 10 Calories, 0 g fat, 1.5 g Carbohydrate, 1 g sugar.



For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Beyer at the Menominee Tribal Clinic at 715-799-6201 or kimberlyk@mtclinic.net