



Snacking Smarter

Junk food has given snacking a bad wrap. However, having a snack is not necessarily a bad thing. The important thing is what you are eating as your snack. Snacks are mostly referred to as chips, candy, and junk food. However, there are many other ways to snack healthier and smarter. Instead of just eating to eat, listen to your stomach and stop when you are comfortable. By incorporating healthy, nutrient dense snacks into your diet, you will be able to feel full longer and eat less. Below are a few helpful hints to get you snacking smarter!

- ❖ **Fruit.** Fruit is a great snack. Instead of reaching for a bag of chips or candy bar, grab a piece of fruit. Apples, clementines, and bananas are great choices. Not only do they provide you with vitamins and minerals, but are also excellent sources of fiber.
- ❖ **Peanut butter on Crackers.** Whether you are on the road, at a desk or at home, peanut butter and crackers is a great snack. Although high in fat, peanut butter is a healthy monounsaturated fat good for heart health. This snack will help you stay full and hold you over before your next meal.
- ❖ **Nuts.** Nuts are full of fiber and rich in other vitamins and minerals. This makes for a healthy, tasty snack. Some nuts to choose are walnuts, peanuts, soy nuts, almonds or cashews. Remember that a serving size equals the palm of your hand.
- ❖ **Trail Mix.** This is an excellent snack! By adding a variety of nuts and dried fruits, you can make a great trail mix to your liking as an excellent source of fiber as well as vitamins and minerals.
- ❖ **Cut veggies.** Prepare your favorite veggies such as celery, carrots, tomatoes, and broccoli so that when you feel hungry you can grab pre-cut veggies instead of chips! Try dipping them in a low fat dip or hummus.
- ❖ **Low fat yogurt.** Add fresh fruit or nuts for an extra boost of nutrients and crunch.
- ❖ **Popcorn.** Popcorn can be a healthy snack without all the added butter and salt. This is a much better choice than chips or candy!
- ❖ **Peanut butter sandwich with banana on whole wheat bread.** This snack will help you stay full with all the fiber and protein peanut butter, bananas and whole wheat bread offer. It is delicious!
- ❖ **Low fat Cottage cheese with fruit.** Choose low fat, calcium-fortified cottage cheese to get some extra calcium in your diet. Be creative and add fruit or nuts! Try cottage cheese also with a sprinkle of sugar and dollop of whipped cream--Tastes like rice pudding!
- ❖ **Black bean and corn salsa with baked tortilla chips.** This tasty snack is full of antioxidants that help fight cancer and other diseases as well as slow down the aging process. It is also an excellent source of fiber!
- ❖ **Hot chocolate.** Hot chocolate is a good source of calcium. Whether it is plain milk or chocolate, you are still getting your calcium. Choose skim or 1% milk to cut back on fat.
- ❖ **String Cheese with whole-wheat crackers.** String cheese is an excellent source of calcium and protein! By adding whole-wheat crackers, you can boost your fiber intake.
- ❖ **Cereal Bars.** Look for fiber, sugar and protein. Aim for at least 3g fiber, less than 8g sugar and 6 or more grams of protein!

Now how does that sound! Snacks can still taste good without all the fat, calories and sodium. By choosing these items for snacks, you will find yourself cutting back on snacking because you feel fuller.

Fat

It is important to watch the fat in the snacks you eat. When choosing snacks, you want to be most careful of the saturated and trans fat content. These fats promote heart disease by depositing cholesterol into the arteries. Trans fat is a new word that you may have seen lately. This is the main fat in most snack and commercial foods. It is an artificial fat that is made to extend shelf life. Trans fats are now found on the nutrition fact label starting January of this year. Try to avoid or eliminate foods that contain these ingredients:

- Partially hydrogenated oils
- Hydrogenated oil
- Shortening

Fiber

Fiber-rich foods are generally lower in calories and fat, bulk up in your stomach, and help you feel fuller after a meal. This means fewer cravings for snacks during the day. Choose snacks that contain fiber to help you reach early satiety and to meet your daily dietary fiber needs. Some good sources of fiber for snacks include:

- Fruit and vegetables
- Bran cereals
- Nuts and grains
- Trail Mixes
- Kashi Cereal Bas

Generally speaking, adults need 25-30 grams of fiber a day. Most Americans do not consume nearly enough. However, by incorporating fiber into your daily snacks, you can aim to meet your fiber needs! It is important also to increase your intake slowly to prevent stomach irritation and to increase water consumption to prevent constipation!

Plan ahead

Instead of grazing all day on, think ahead and prepare your snacks before the day begins. By planning ahead, you will save time, money and calories. Use these tips when preparing your snacks:

- ✓ Plan snacks as part of the day's food plan
- ✓ Eat snacks at the same time each day such as midmorning and midday
- ✓ Pre cut veggies and place in individual bags so that they are ready and convenient to grab on the way out the door!

- ✓ Try to eat snacks that include at least two different food groups.

Black Bean and Corn Salsa

1 15-oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 11-oz can corn, drained and rinsed
1 red pepper, chopped
1 orange pepper, chopped
1 yellow pepper, chopped
¼ cup red onion, chopped
1 T lime juice
2-3 garlic cloves, minced
3 T red wine vinegar
3 T olive oil
3 T Fresh Cilantro, chopped

Combine ingredients in large mixing bowl. Serve with baked tortilla chips or over top grilled chicken, pork, fish, baked potato or a salad!

Serving Size ¼ cup

Calories 50 Fat 2g Carbohydrate 7g Fiber 2g Protein 2g Sodium 50mg

Heart-Healthy Trail Mix

1 cup unsalted whole almonds
2 cup unsalted peanuts
1 cup unsalted soy nuts
3 cups whole wheat Chex® cereal
1 cup Bran cereal (like All Bran Bran Buds or Nature's Path Smart Bran)
½ cup dried cranberries
2-3 T ground flaxseed

Mix ingredients together in large bowl and serve.

Feel free to be creative and substitute different nuts or fruit to satisfy your taste buds!

Serving size ¼ cup.

Calories 190 Fat 11g Carbohydrates 19g Fiber 6g Protein 9g Sodium 95mg