

SENSIBLE SNACKS

If you think that snacking is off limits on a weight loss plan, then you may want to reconsider. In moderation and with some advanced planning, snacking may actually help, not hinder, your weight loss efforts and your health. A light snack can satisfy hunger and help prevent overeating at meals. When chosen wisely, snacks boost the nutritional value of your daily food plan. They also add enjoyment to your food choices. By balancing higher-calorie snacks with lower-calorie foods at other times of the day, you can enjoy some of your favorite snacks while keeping your weight under control.

Tips for Smart Snacking

The following tips will help you make snacks a pleasurable and healthful part of your day:

Fit snacks into your food plan

Decide when you prefer a snack—mid-morning, mid-afternoon, or after dinner—and save some of your daily choices for these snacks.

Focus on healthful snacks

Choose snacks that are good sources of a variety of nutrients. For example, yogurt is rich in calcium, apricots and carrots provide vitamin A, bran cereal is full of fiber. Keep sweets or higher-fat snacks for occasional treats and eat them in small amounts.

The following snacks combine food choices, and in doing so, provide nutritional variety:

- Cereal and low-fat milk
- Nonfat yogurt and fresh fruit
- Peanut butter on mini rice cakes, whole wheat or rice crackers
- Raw veggies with yogurt dip or hummus
- Raisin and nut mix
- Tuna with reduced-fat mayonnaise and chopped celery in a mini pita
- Microwave-baked potato topped with nonfat plain yogurt, broccoli, or shredded part-skim cheese

Snack consciously

Avoid distractions, like watching TV or reading the newspaper when snacking, so that you stay aware of what and how much you're eating.

Snack for the right reasons

Eat snacks to curb hunger or boost your energy. Find non-food activities such as going for a walk or talking to a friend to take the place of munching because you're bored, frustrated or excited.

Pick the Healthier Snack

To cut down on fat and calories:

Instead of...	Try...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato chips • Corn chips • Sour cream dip • Buttered popcorn • Ice cream • Jelly doughnut • Cinnamon raisin bun • Vanilla crème sandwich • Chocolate candy bar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced-fat potato chips or pretzels • Baked tortilla chips • Fat-free sour cream or yogurt dip, or salsa • Air-popped or light microwave popcorn • Low-fat frozen yogurt • Mini Bagel with light strawberry jam • Raisin toast with cottage cheese and sprinkle of cinnamon • Vanilla wafer cookies • Sugar-free chocolate pudding made with fat-free milk

Snacking Solutions

Try these hints for fitting healthful, satisfying snacks into your lifestyle:

On the Job

- Keep a supply of nutritious snacks in your desk drawer. For example, try dried fruit, graham crackers, mini bagels, pretzels, or light popcorn.
- Try not to snack while working. If possible, take a snack break in the office dining area, or clear a space at your desk, away from your work, and enjoy your snack without distraction.
- Check the Light Meals, Main Meals module for more “at the office” ideas.

Around the House

- Replace a dish of candy with a bowl of fruit. Fill the bowl or your refrigerator with out-of-the-ordinary fruit, like kiwi, figs, papaya, Asian pears, or star fruit.
- Keep ready-to-eat raw veggies in the refrigerator, such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, or green pepper, cucumber or zucchini strips. Keep tempting sweets hidden or out of the house.

- For a cool, refreshing snack, freeze grapes or banana slices. Try an orange juice spritzer by mixing orange juice with sparkling water. Or make a strawberry fruit smoothie: Combine frozen strawberries with plain or vanilla-flavored nonfat light yogurt and process in a blender.
- For a warm, soothing snack, enjoy a cup of soup, hot cereal, or sugar-free hot chocolate.

On the Go

- Pack a sack with fresh fruit, dried mixed fruit, individual-sized boxed raisins, part-skim cheese and whole grain crackers, pretzels, boxed juice, or bottled water.
- At the mall, opt for frozen low-fat yogurt, soft pretzels, fruit salad, or juice.
- At the convenience store, choose nonfat yogurt, fresh fruit, juice, flavored mini rice cakes, light popcorn, frozen fruit bars, or individual-sized packages of fat-free cookies.