

## MAKING HEALTHY SNACK CHOICES

Consuming regular snacks can be an important weight management strategy. Snacking keeps your energy levels up, and prevents you from becoming overly hungry, which can lead to poor food choices. Eating every 3 - 4 hours can also help regulate your metabolism, which ensures you burn calories throughout the day.

Strive for at least 2 small snacks per day. Limit yourself to 100-150 calories or less per snack. Also, be sure your snack is balanced - it offers complex carbohydrates for energy, protein for muscle building and repair, and a small amount of fat for satiety. You can ensure nutritional balance and prevent snack boredom by varying your daily choices.

Below is a list of some sample healthy snacks:

- 1 cup fat free yogurt topped with 1 cup berries
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of whole grain cereal, nut and dried fruit trail mix
- 1 apple and 1 oz. low-fat cheese
- 1 cup yogurt smoothie made with real fruit
- 1 oz. baked tortilla chips with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup bean dip
- 2 oz. low-fat cheese on 5 whole grain crackers
- 1 whole wheat tortilla with 1 oz. melted cheese and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup salsa
- 1 cup raw vegetables and 2 Tbsp. low-fat dip
- 1 Tbsp. nut butter on a banana
- 1 cup berries topped with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup low-fat granola cereal
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup whole grain cereal and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup raisins with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup skim milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup pasta salad made with raw veggies, cheese, and low-fat dressing
- $\frac{1}{4}$  pita pocket stuffed with raw vegetables and 1 slice low-fat cheese
- 1 cup low-fat, vegetable, bean soup
- $\frac{1}{4}$  turkey and cheese sandwich on whole grain bread
- 1 handful almonds and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cottage cheese and 1 cup pineapple
- $\frac{1}{4}$  peanut butter/banana sandwich on whole grain bread
- Toast  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a whole wheat English muffin and top with a slice of tomato and low-fat cheese



You're more apt to opt for good-for-you snacks if you stock your refrigerator and shelves with foods that are fast - not fussy.

### The benefits of snacks:

You may feel guilty about snacking, but snacks aren't necessarily bad. In fact, mini meals several times a day can be beneficial. Here's how:

- **Binge control.** If eating several low-fat, whole-grain crackers, a few pretzels, a piece of fruit or some raw vegetables keeps you from taking second or third helpings at your next meal, you may actually consume fewer total calories for the day.
- **Extra energy and nutrients.** Traditional, made-at-home meals often lose out to busy schedules. A grab-and-go snack can be the difference between some nourishment and none at all.
- **Satisfaction for small appetites.** Young children's tiny stomachs can hold only small portions of food at a time. Older adults who are less active and who burn fewer calories also may feel comfortable eating smaller meals more frequently.

## HOW SNACKS FIT INTO A HEALTHY DIET

### Choose healthy snacks:

Select foods that can satisfy your hunger and supply your body with energy while providing important nutrients. Choose a wide variety of these foods to ensure that you get all the necessary nutrients and make your snacks more interesting. Here are some snack ideas:



- **Whole grains.** Whole-grain snacks are rich in fiber and complex carbohydrates, which give you energy that has staying power. Look for items such as low-fat, whole-grain crackers and whole-grain crisp breads.
- **Fruits and vegetables.** Eating fruits and vegetables provides a feeling of fullness with no fat and a small number of calories. They also provide vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients.
- **Nuts and seeds.** Nuts and seeds provide protein, which helps keep you satisfied longer. Nuts and seeds contain mostly monounsaturated fat, a healthy fat. Nuts and seeds are high in calories, however, so stick to one serving size.
- **Low-fat dairy products.** Cheese, yogurt and other dairy products are good sources of calcium and protein, plus a variety of other vitamins and minerals. Dairy products can be high in fat, so choose the low-fat versions. Some yogurts have a lot of added sugar, so consider "light" yogurt if you want to limit your calorie intake.



Approximate number of calories	Healthy snack options
10 calories	1 large stalk of celery
25-30 calories	1 cup raw vegetables 6 medium baby carrots
60 calories	2 cups air-popped or light popcorn 1 cup cantaloupe or grapes 1 small can of vegetable juice
100 calories	1 cup sliced bananas and fresh raspberries 2 domino-sized slices low-fat Colby or cheddar cheese 1 fat-free chocolate pudding cup
150 calories	¼ cup frozen, low-fat yogurt topped with ¼ cup blueberries 1 cup sliced apples with 1 tablespoon smooth peanut butter 4 slices whole-grain crispbread (a wafer-thin cracker)

*For more information on healthy snacks, contact The National Institute For Fitness and Sport at 317.274.3432, or visit our Web site at [www.nifs.org](http://www.nifs.org).*