

## Snacking Can Be a Good Thing

Too often we snack without thinking about it because we're bored, stressed, or sad, rather than physically hungry. Sometimes we snack just out of habit. We tend to eat these extra calories in addition to the other foods we eat, and they can add up and contribute to weight gain.

A planned, healthy snack can be good for you. By planning in advance and carefully selecting healthy snacks, you can avoid mindless snacking on less healthy foods and prevent yourself from overeating.

### Tips for Healthy Snacking at Work

- Ask yourself if you are really hungry. Maybe you are just thirsty, and a drink of water would satisfy you. Some people make it a habit to always have a glass of water before they eat a snack.
- Maybe what you need is a break in your routine for a few minutes. See if a short walk helps.
- Steer away from tempting but unhealthy snacks available at work in vending machines, the school store and the cafeteria. Instead, make healthy choices or bring healthy snacks from home.
- Do not keep a candy or snack dish on or in your desk. If you keep snacks in your desk, stick to things that are packaged in single servings like a bar or one serving of nuts or cookies. An open large package may lead you to eat more than you really want.
- Watch portion sizes, especially with snacks that can be eaten by the handful, like popcorn, chips, jelly beans, M & M's and nuts. Read the label of a packaged snack and note the amount in one portion. Remember, you don't have to eat the whole thing. Instead, share or save some for another day.
- Avoid grabbing snacks that your co-workers bring in to share, like donuts and baked goods. Just because it is available does not mean that you have to eat it.
- Don't snack mindlessly! Appreciate every bite and remember that snack calories do count.
- *ALWAYS read the label on packaged snacks.* Choose snacks using these guidelines:
  - 5g Total Fat or less per serving (Total Fat includes saturated fat and *Trans fat*).
  - 30g Total Carbohydrates or less per serving (sugar is included as part of carbohydrate).
  - Juices should contain at least 50% juice; have 12 ounces or less.
  - Milk, including plain or flavored milks should be low-fat (1%) or fat-free. Have 12 ounces or less.
  - Drink water, diet soda or iced tea, instead of regular soda or sweetened iced tea.



# Healthy Snacks for Every Craving

## Thirsty?

- flavored water
- sparkling water
- carbonated sugar-free (diet) beverages or sugar-free ice tea
- tea with honey or lemon
- small non-fat milk
- tomato juice or V8 juice (look for low sodium)
- to-go packets of Crystal Lite or other low-calorie or zero calorie mix

## Hungry?

- whole wheat toast, English muffin, whole-grain low-fat crackers or 1/2 bagel with jam
- High fiber cereal, hot or cold, with fresh fruit , and skim or 1% milk
- low-fat or non-fat yogurt
- reduced-fat cottage cheese

## Craving sweets?

- applesauce (available in snack packs)
- piece of fruit or a cup of cut melon, berries or grapes
- low-fat granola bar
- small low-fat pudding (also sugar-free)
- sugar-free gum
- hard candy
- cherry tomatoes
- two Hershey kisses enjoyed very slowly (only two)
- fruit pieces in light yogurt
- chocolate or vanilla soy milk

## Need something salty or crunchy?

- celery sticks filled with low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter
- vegetables dipped in low-fat yogurt, fat-free sour cream, or low-fat or fat-free salad dressing
- piece of toast (try whole wheat toast) or whole-grain low-fat crackers with peanut butter
- small bag of baked chips
- hummus with cut vegetables, pita bread, or low-fat crackers
- 1 ounce of nuts (roughly a small child's handful)
- Apple with peanut butter

## Looking for snacks from a cafeteria or a vending machine?

Many healthy options are available. Look for fruit (fresh and dried), nuts and cereal bars. The guidelines on the previous page can help you make healthier choices.

## References:

American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol. 76, No. 3, 518-528, September 2002  
Fit City/Fit Schools Campaign in San Antonio, TX; Bexar County Community Health Collaborative, San Antonio TX  
Alabama Dept. of Public Health Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit, Guide to Healthy Vending Choices

