

# Snack time can be a healthy, and delicious, thing

Although there is no specific definition for “snack” or “snacking,” we generally think of it as the foods and drinks we eat between meals. The nutritional value of the snack, the timing, frequency, and location of those snacks, among other things, are different from person to person. That makes it hard to study. Research does tell us that people who snack more often do consume more energy each day than others, but we aren’t exactly sure how that relates to body weight.

Many people may think of snacking as a bad thing. But it is good to listen to our bodies and hear when we are hungry. You don’t need to feel guilty for snacking. Instead, use it to add fruits, vegetables, and other fulfilling choices to your diet. For example, if you find that you can’t eat enough fruit with your meals, grabbing an apple or other fruit can be an easy and convenient option when you feel the need for a snack.

So many healthy options are quick, grab-and-go type foods that lend themselves perfectly as a snack. Items with little prep include trail mix with a variety of nuts and seeds, raw fruits and vegetables such as a handful of cherry tomatoes or an apple, dried fruits such as raisins, peanut butter with whole-wheat crackers or a banana, string cheese, Greek yogurt, and even plain popcorn. As you can see, you can find many of these items outside of the “snack” aisle at your local grocery store. It gives you a chance to be creative with healthy foods you enjoy.

Healthful snacking is a great way to curb hunger between larger meals. Choosing foods from various food groups will help you feel satisfied and full for longer. Protein and healthy fats will tell your body that you have had enough for now until the next time you eat. A handful of almonds and a serving of grapes will make you feel much more satisfied than grapes alone.

Some people also find it difficult to drink enough water throughout the day. Make it a goal to drink one glass of water with your snack, whatever it may be. Not only will it help keep you hydrated, it will also leave you feeling satisfied. You may find you snack less frequently or choose smaller snack portions.

When at home, it may be helpful to eat meals on a predictable schedule and have snacks at regular times each day. It is okay to look forward to snacks and have them planned rather than constantly wandering into the kitchen to graze throughout the day. Portioning snacks out ahead of time is an easy way to help make smart snack choices while also enjoying the foods you love most.

The next time you are looking for a snack, use it as an opportunity to add nutrition to your diet through fun, creative, and filling snack options.

## Reference:

Potter, M., Vlassopoulos, A., & Lehmann, U. (2018). Snacking recommendations worldwide: A scoping review. *Advances in Nutrition*, 9(2), 86-98.

## Sources:

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