

Be a Smart Snacker!
Look for these grab-and-go choices
from the Vending Machine

*A Balanced Diet is Important for a Healthy Body
AND a Healthy Brain!*

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How to Be a Smart Snacker

Snacks are great, and, it is important to snack smart. Snacks keep you going until your next meal, they're a break from your work or play, and they can help prevent overeating. In addition, snacks put flexibility in your day because you get energy when your body needs it, not just when the clock says it's time to eat. Research shows healthful snacking can aid in lowering cholesterol levels and in maintaining your weight. Eating 4 or 5 small feedings a day is more beneficial than 3 meals for many people.

How do you get started? Listen to your body. Eat when you are hungry. Stop when you are satisfied. Make snacks easy and interesting. Eat smaller amounts at mealtime. Save part of a meal, especially when eating out, to eat as a snack later.

Be prepared for your hunger. Have food available so you can eat when you are hungry. Stash wholesome snacks at your desk, in the car, in the pantry, and in your backpack or briefcase. Stop by the vending machine *before* you are ravenous. Here are some smart snack choices.

- Pretzels are a great low calorie treat when you get the munchies.
- Choose granola bars that are low in sugar and provide fiber with some protein. They are handy and easy to eat on the run.
- Crunch on a bag of popcorn, a whole grain and a wonderful snack food. Choose popcorn made without trans fats (hydrogenated vegetable oils).
- Munch an apple. It a "grab-and-go" food. You'll feel full for several hours due to its pectin and fiber content. (Pectin and fiber aid in lowering cholesterol.)
- Select finger foods like baby carrots. Enjoy them one-by-one. Pre-packaged and ready-to-eat fruit and veggies are great any time. They satisfy the munchies and your sweet tooth.
- Baby carrots, a cheese stick, and whole grain crackers are fun finger foods. Cheese provides protein offering staying power. Carrots are loaded with fiber and antioxidants. Whole grains are high in fiber, B-vitamins, and complex carbohydrates.
- Satisfy chocolate cravings with a package of peanut M&Ms or a few Hershey's kisses. It's perfectly natural to like sweets. Most people like sweets. It's unrealistic to give up sweet treats if you really enjoy them. Like anything else, eat them on occasion and in moderation.

- For a quick and easy snack, choose cereal and low-fat or fat-free milk. Choose low-sugar, whole-grain cereals like Cheerios or oatmeal. Cereals are fortified with folic acid, iron and other important vitamins and minerals.
- Treat yourself to a variety of dried fruit – dried cranberries, prunes, apricots, and raisins.
- Choose a package of nuts -- peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pistachios or other nuts. Nuts are rich in protein and unsaturated fat. They provide vitamin E, a powerful antioxidant that is cancer protective and heart healthy.
- Trail mix combined with nuts, seeds and dried fruit is satisfying, great-tasting and provides fiber and protein. Choose those low in trans fats. And watch your portions!
- For a snack that is high in calcium, protein and vitamins and is filling and great tasting, reach for a carton of yogurt.
- If you have the munchies and desire something sweet, animal crackers, fig bars or grahams are low-fat choices. Along with a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk, cookies may just hit the spot.
 - Don't misinterpret thirst for hunger. Always keep a water bottle handy. And after a game of soccer, football, baseball, track, etc., nothing is more refreshing than a glass of cold water or sports drink.

Enough is Enough

Smart Snackers know that portion size is important! Too much of even a good thing is not necessarily a good thing! Learn your body's cues for hunger and feeling satisfied. Remember this, *it takes your body about 20 minutes after eating to signal "full."*

Practice "**Just Enough Snacking**" . . .

- Snacks *bridge* the food gap between meals. They aren't meant to be full meals.
- **Balance is the key.** Be sure to choose your high performance foods first – those foods that, *in addition to calories*, provide vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Portions-controlled packages- by the ounce or by the 100 calorie portion- help control calories.
- Make snacks part of **The Big Picture** . . . Pay attention to all the food you eat in a day and choose your snacks as part of the whole picture.
- Know your limitations! *A spoonful of sugar* . . . as the song goes. Sweets and other high-calorie snack can be part of balanced eating as long as they are eaten in moderation.