

SMART SNACKING WITH DIABETES

Snacking can help keep your blood sugar from getting too low, it can sustain energy levels in between meals and it can prevent overeating at mealtime. Smart snacking can also help fill in the gaps in certain food groups and nutrients you may be falling short on at mealtime. Whether you have diabetes or not, the key is to choose sensible snacks that will help you meet your health and wellness goals.

Timing of Snacks

The timing of snacks is important. For optimal blood glucose control, you want to try to eat something every 3-4 hours throughout the day. This is where snacks come into play. If you see your next meal is going to be more than four hours away, plan to have a snack to hold you over. Individual food preferences and lifestyle are considered when determining timing of snacks and type. Meet with a Registered Dietitian to plan; accordingly, snack selection and timing may change based on exercise patterns and lifestyle. A mid-afternoon snack and small evening snack are appropriate for most individuals with diabetes, depending, of course, on the timing of your meals. For example, a mid-morning snack may be required on days when breakfast and lunch are spaced far apart. If you have diabetes and are on insulin, snacks are routinely included as part of your meal plan.

What is a healthful snack?

A healthful snack contains a combination of healthy carbohydrate and a source of protein and possibly a source of healthy fats. To be a successful snacker, it's important to plan ahead! Prepare small containers of combination snacks at the beginning of each week and grab two to three selections for each day. Always keep a healthy snack on hand (in your bag or at your desk) in case blood sugar gets low or if a planned mealtime is going to be delayed.

Examples of healthful snacks:

- 2 rice cakes spread with ¼ of a medium avocado
- 1-2 slices turkey breast wrapped around whole grain pretzels logs
- Mini whole wheat pita pocket stuffed with hummus and cucumber slices
- 1 slice whole grain bread lightly spread with low fat ricotta cheese
- ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese with 1 ounce of raw walnuts
- 1 oz. part-skim mozzarella cheese stick plus 5-10 whole grain crackers
- 1/2 turkey or tuna sandwich on whole grain bread
- Apple or pear wedges lightly spread with all-natural peanut or almond butter
- Low-fat Greek Style Yogurt with ¼ cup berries
- Sushi roll (3 pieces) - preferably made with brown rice
- Salmon salad with diced tomatoes and cucumbers
- 1 Tbsp. Black bean dip with 8-10 whole grain tortilla chips

Greek Yogurt or regular... What's the difference?

The principal difference in creating Greek yogurt is that after the milk is heated and cultured, it is allowed to sit in muslin or cheesecloth bags, so that the whey filters out of the yogurt resulting in a thicker, creamier product. Greek yogurt tends to be lower in sugar and higher in protein content, which, among other things, makes you feel fuller longer and keeps blood sugar steady.

Tips for Snacking on the Run

If you're in a rush and have forgotten to plan or pack a healthful snack from home, there are a few things to keep in mind when grabbing a pre-packaged snack:

When it comes to choosing healthful packaged snacks, label reading is a must. Here are some tips for label sleuthing and healthy nibbling:

- Watch your portions. Even if it's a healthful snack, eating double or triple portions can raise blood sugar level and add unwanted fat and calories to your diet. Try not to eat out of a family size bag or box.
- Try to choose snacks that fit within the following guidelines for one ounce or for one serving: No more than 15-30 grams of carbohydrates, 200 milligrams of sodium and 200 calories.

Free Foods

These include drinks or foods that contain fewer than 20 calories and 5 grams or less of carbohydrates per serving. Free foods should be limited to three servings per day and should be spread out over the course of the day. Eating all three "free" servings at once could result in raising blood sugar levels because the small amounts of carbohydrate are combined into one large total.

Examples of Free Foods:

- 1 cup sugar-free gelatin
- 5 baby carrots
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup light popcorn
- 5 cherry tomatoes + 1 Tbsp low-fat dressing
- 1 hard-boiled egg
- 3 celery sticks + 1 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1 string cheese stick
- 1 cup of salad greens + 1 Tbsp cucumber + drizzle of vinegar and oil

What types of snacks do you usually reach for?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write down 3 healthy snacks you can try that would be healthier options with a high fiber carb + protein combo.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____