

# How to Snack Happy...and Healthy

By Susan Burke March,  
MS, RD/LD, CDE

Snacking is an American pastime! Food manufacturers are raking in the dough by producing high-fat, high-sugar snacks. But, snacking doesn't have to be an unhealthy habit. In fact, eating every few hours is a good strategy to keep your energy levels up and to avoid hunger. By keeping healthy snacks around, you won't be tempted to grab foods that may throw you off your healthy meal plan.

A University of Toronto study found that people who divided their meals into 5 or 6 "mini meals" daily had a lower risk for high cholesterol and heart disease than those "three square meals a day" people who ate the same amount of food. So, snacking is a good strategy for staying with your weight loss plan, and for keeping healthy!

Plan ahead for your snacking: When you're working at home, work on your fitness and health at the same time. Plan to take a snack break every 2 hours, and follow through by getting up, stretching and eating! However, plan what you're eating around your meal plan. If your breakfast normally includes cereal, milk, coffee, and perhaps a fruit and a serving of toast with spread, then space that meal out into two separate, smaller meals. Have your breakfast of cereal, milk and coffee and then, mid-morning, take a break and eat the remainder of the meal. You can do the same for lunch and your mid-afternoon snack. Eating small meals more frequently will keep your metabolism revved up...just be sure your frequent meals are quality meals!

Here are some helpful snacking-related tips:

1. Prepare to succeed! Make sure you have healthy snacks handy, and remove temptation.

Success with any initiative requires the proper tools, so keep a bowl full of diced veggies and baby carrots, and/or fresh or dried fruit close at hand. Not only are these snack items healthy and low fat, but they are fiber rich, which will make you feel full and satiated. Eat with some water, and you're really in business!

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3. Snacking is good...as long as you snack on healthy foods. Eating any food to excess may prove excessively caloric, so make sure to moderate your quantities of any one item, and drink plenty of water. In fact, snacking keeps your energy levels constant and your hunger at bay, so don't hesitate to have a cup of tea or bouillon with some crunchy raw veggies. Or, you can microwave a bag of broccoli or green beans and sprinkle on a little herbal seasoning or "butter buds" for flavor.

4. Eat your snack and/or lunch at the first sign of hunger, so that being famished won't lead you to a full binge. It's all too easy to down a half a bag of chips while your

"healthy" lunch is heating in the microwave.

5. Schedule a short 15-30 minute workout session mid-day, so that your mind can tell your stomach that getting full on too much snacking and/or large amounts of heavy foods will not be conducive to a good work out. It's amazing how knowing you will work out "soon" will inspire you to eat lightly. After the workout, you'll be more inclined to make healthy selections for the rest of the day...and your metabolism will be kicked up a notch!

6. Get up every half hour and SQUEEZE your buttocks! Sitting all day can cause the "secretary spread" (flattening and widening of the gluteus maximum). A few good isometric squeezes can make all the difference to keep your posterior toned.

The following are some snack suggestions for when you're on-the-go:

1. Best strategy? Space your meals out over the day, taking something from each meal to eat 2-3 hours later. For example, if you usually eat cereal, milk, fruit and a yogurt, save the yogurt for a snack!

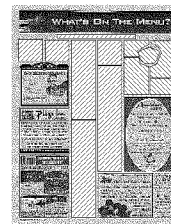
2. If you're on the run, pack a cup of nonfat or low fat yogurt and a cup of low sugar cereal in a Baggie, (I like Bran Flakes or Cheerios) and when you get to work or school, just mix them together for a crunchy snack.

3. Make a quick shake with a cup of nonfat milk, ½ banana or a cup of berries, and some crushed ice.

4. You can eat half of your lunch and save the other half for a snack a couple of hours later.

5. Some calorie "free" snacks (less than 30 calories) that you can make ahead of time and carry with you or keep at your desk are:

• C u t - u p



veggies like baby carrots or cut-up carrots, celery, red pepper, cucumber, broccoli, cauliflower...all "crunchy" veggies are great snacks, and very handy.

- 2 cups of air-popped popcorn

- 1/2 cup watermelon or cantaloupe

- 12 pretzel sticks

6. About 60 calories per snack:

- A serving of fruit: 1 medium apple, peach, pear, or nectarine; a small orange, 1/2 grapefruit, 12 cherries, 15 grapes, 1/2 banana, 1

cup of berries

- 1/2 cup nonfat milk

- 1/2 cup of nonfat yogurt

- 1/4 cup of nonfat cottage cheese

- 4 small shrimp

7. Keep a large bowl of sugar free jello in your refrigerator, and you can have as much as you want. Enjoy sodium-free

club soda with a squeeze of lemon or lime, and a diet soda now and then is fine. Don't forget, drink cool, clear, refreshing plain water, so important for a healthy metabolism and to fill

yourself up!

*Susan Burke March, MS, RD/LD, CDE is the author of "Making Weight Control Second Nature: Living Thin Naturally." She may be reached online at [www. SusanBurkeMarch.com](http://www.SusanBurkeMarch.com).*

