

ADDING SNACKS FOR A HEALTHY METABOLISM

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When trying to reduce overall caloric intakes, dieters sometimes avoid eating between meals. Yet feeding your body frequently can help contribute to a healthy metabolism. Rather than replacing a meal, though, snacking should be used strategically to help you stay on track.

Meals and snacks should be spread out by an hour or two, and snacks should total a couple hundred calories or less.

By eating at regular intervals, your blood sugar levels remain stable. Stable blood sugar can assist with increased energy and decreased cravings.

Choose your snacks with long term results in mind. Combine lean protein, complex carbohydrates and some healthy fat to help you feel fuller longer. Fruit and yogurt are good choices if you have a sweet tooth because they are low in fat and calories. Additionally, the fiber in whole fruits and veggies will help you feel full longer.

Consciously limit yourself to a single serving. Snacking isn't grazing. Mindless eating is one of the downfalls of snackers. You may start with just a handful of your favorite baked chips and before you know it, the entire bag is gone. Wasn't it the potato chip industry that coined the phrase, "You can't eat just one?" Here are some strategies to help avoid unconscious snacking:

Enjoy your snack without distraction. Instead of munching mindlessly in front of the television or computer, enjoy your snack someplace free from distraction.

Walk away from the source. Once you have filled a small plate with your desired snack serving, put the container away and leave the kitchen.

Learn what a single serving looks like. While learning to snack responsibly, you may need to measure out each single serving. In our world of super-sized portions, it may surprise you what a serving actually looks like.

Plan your snacks as you would your meals. Sometimes experts refer to snacks as a "mini-meal." Making snack decisions when you are not hungry can help you make responsible decisions rather giving in to the craving of the moment. It can also help your shopping. If you know you have an unhealthy weakness, just don't buy the item at the grocery store.

Snacking is just as important to consider as any other meal of the day. Without a plan, unhealthy nibbles can add empty calories and sabotage your diet. Making changes in your snacking habits will take you one step closer to reaching your weight loss goal!

