

## Smart Snacking

Snack attacks are no longer taboo! Eating several small meals each day gives us energy and keeps our blood glucose levels more stable. It's important to choose snacks that count towards our nutrition for the day and fill in the gaps in our diet, rather than snacks filled with "empty calories" (calories that offer no nutrients). Snacks can boost our metabolism, increase our energy and keep us from overeating at our next meal. It's best to watch our portions and keep our snacks to 100-200 calories, so they don't become a meal. Wisely chosen snacks can increase the variety in our eating!

Some ideas:

Fresh fruits and vegetables-since most of us don't eat as many as recommended, this is a great way to improve your eating habits and increase your intake of nutrients, fiber and disease-fighting phytochemicals. Plus, most are easy to grab and eat on the run! Go for variety-pears, berries, grapes, melon, cucumber, broccoli, cauliflower, colored peppers, jicama

Popcorn-considered a whole grain-watch the sodium and fat in microwave versions (look for 94% fat free and no trans fat). Air popped is best, then spray with butter or oil and some herbs/spices for real flavor

Fruit smoothies-an awesome choice especially if you use low-fat dairy (yogurt, milk) and mix with fresh, frozen or canned fruit in a blender

Cereals-choose those high in fiber (3 or more grams/serving) and low in sugar and splash on the low-fat dairy

Yogurt-so many are loaded with sugar and calories! (read labels!) Consider plain low-fat yogurt with fruit and a little granola for crunch

Peanut butter 1 Tbsp. on celery stick or whole grain cracker (try Ry-Crisp or Ak-Mak) or bread/toast-it is primarily fat, but most of it is heart healthy monounsaturated fat

Low-fat cheese- such as part-skim mozzarella cheese stick or 1 ounce of other low-fat cheese on whole grain cracker or ½ english muffin/bagel

Cottage cheese-1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese with fresh or canned fruit

Lean ham or turkey breast-1 ounce of lean deli meat on whole grain crackers

Granola bar-try one with fruit and nuts or a soy protein bar

Ice Cream-look for a low-fat frozen yogurt bar, fudge bar (Smart One brand is wonderful!) or 100% juice bar

Nuts-contain healthy fats as well as nutrients-limit to one ounce or one small handful (don't eat from the can!)

Trail mix-Make your own with nuts, dried fruit, high-fiber cereal (1/4 to ½ cup per serving)

Chips-bake your own chips from tortillas or pita (5-10 min. at 350 degrees) and serve with salsa, guacamole, hummus, or low-fat dip. Try Soy crisps-tasty and a wonderful way to work soy into your diet!

Graham crackers-3 squares with a glass of cold non-fat or 1% milk or try sugar-free hot chocolate made with skim milk

