

WHAT WE'RE READING...



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Healthy Snacking Benefits



Healthy snacking improves overall health, curbs cravings, fights weight gain, regulates mood, boosts brain power and gives you the energy you need to keep going all day

Resisting the urge to reach for a burger, candy, or chips when you're hit with a snack attack can make a big difference in your health — regardless of your age.

"Nutrition really is the key to a healthy lifestyle and a healthy life. It goes a long way toward lowering the risk for heart disease and improving overall health," says Dr. Rita Redberg, a cardiologist at the

University of California, San Francisco Medical Center, who also contributes to health-oriented cookbooks.

Healthy Snacking and Weight Control

Avoiding extreme hunger increases the likelihood that you'll pick the healthy snack rather than raiding the doughnut box in the break room or overeating at meals.

Megan Mullin, a nutritionist at Canyon Ranch SpaClub in Las Vegas, recommends that her clients eat small meals every three to five hours and that they resist the urge to overeat.

"The easy part is the frequent meals; the hard part is keeping them small. We are used to big meals," says Mullin. She recommends eating more during active times of the day: "If you can match your intake with your output, you'll be better off with your weight-control goals."

Another key is to keep healthy snacks on hand. "The best way to avoid eating food that you shouldn't is to not keep any around," says Lisa Rebertus. "On the same reason, you're not supposed to go grocery shopping when you're hungry — you're going to stuff yourself."

Curb Your Cravings

Blood sugar dips three to five hours after you eat. Eating small, frequent snacks keeps your metabolism revved up and helps normalize blood sugar levels. "It's a simple, science-based, online made, which does

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NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with Simple Again's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.

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Another key is to keep healthy snacks on hand. "The best way to avoid eating food that you shouldn't is to not keep any around," says Dr. Redberg. "For the same reason you're not supposed to go grocery shopping when you're hungry — you buy a lot of stuff you really shouldn't."

Curb Your Cravings

Blood sugar dips three to five hours after you eat. Eating small, frequent snacks keeps your metabolism revved up and helps normalize blood sugar. Hunger can throw your body into famine mode, which slows metabolism and makes it easier to pack on the pounds.

Foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, and legumes are satisfying and are packed with the nutrients, fiber, and protein your body needs, and they guard against sugar highs and

lows, so you are less likely to succumb to your sweet tooth — or whatever your dietary Achilles' heel may be.

Healthy Snacking and Energy, Mood, and Brain Boosters

"I tell people to think about food as fuel," Mullin says.

Such nutrient-poor, sugary snacks as candy bars are like fuel that runs hot and flames out. They give you a quick jolt of energy that is followed by a crash that can leave you hungry, cranky, sleepy, and unable to concentrate.

Healthy snacks are more like slow-burning fuel that helps you keep going all day. Having several snacks a day helps banish that postmeal sleepiness that comes from consuming too many calories at one sitting. If you include protein in your snack, you'll derive an extra mental boost — protein-laden food like fish, meat, eggs, cheese, and tofu contain an amino acid that increases the production of neurotransmitters that regulate concentration and alertness.

Many of us naturally reach for carbohydrates when we're feeling down because they help lift our mood by boosting the brain chemical serotonin. While processed foods like plain bagels and cookies give a quick high, it's followed by a sharp low. Good-for-you fruit sugars, honey, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, and many vegetables lift mood and battle fatigue without the roller-coaster effect.

Omega-3 fatty acids are another good nutrient to include in snacks, for your heart as well as your head. Tuna, walnuts, and some other foods contain omega-3s, which help fight high blood pressure and heart disease, as well as depression and anxiety. The effects of omega-3s are also being studied as they relate to a number of other health conditions, including joint diseases, schizophrenia, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

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