

HEALTHY SNACKS

We all know how hard it can be to find snacks that are both healthy and tasty, and not to mention convenient. It can be done though, and the benefits for swapping your unhealthy snacks for some healthier varieties include more sustained energy to get through your day, weight management and no more 3:30-itis. Some tips to remember; plan meals and snacks in advance so that you always have a healthy option on hand, and, become familiar with the nutritional labels on packaged food and go for the healthier option



FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SNACKS

You can't go wrong with fresh fruit and veg as a healthy snack!

Whole Fresh Fruit - apples, pears, oranges, mandarins and bananas are all great snack options and are easily transportable, making them ideal to take to work or carry in your bag for a convenient snack on the go.

Veggie Sticks - chopped carrot, celery, capsicum and cucumber sticks, paired with a dip such as hummus or tzatziki, make for a quick and nutritious snack. Have a container in the fridge full of chopped veggie sticks ready to go when the hunger strikes.

Smaller Fruits - berries and grapes are super healthy and sweet snacks to have on hand. Try having them on their own or toss them in some Greek yoghurt for a balanced and filling snack.

Other Veggies - cherry tomatoes, snow peas and sugar snap peas are excellent healthy snack options to have by themselves or with a nice dip. Barely any preparation required - simply grab a pack from the supermarket and keep in the fridge at work for a convenient and healthy snack.

DAIRY SNACKS

Get a hit of protein and calcium from these delightful dairy-based options.

Yoghurt - plain, natural or Greek style yoghurts are a fantastic protein-packed snack, and they also contain probiotics for healthy digestion. Avoid the 'low fat', 'light' or fruity varieties of yoghurt as they are full of sugar and other additives to make up for the lack of fat (ie. flavour!). Throw in some fresh fruit or berries or a dash of honey and cinnamon for sweetness if you find the plain yoghurts too tart. Coconut yoghurt is a great option for those with sensitivities to lactose.

Cheese - cottage and ricotta cheeses are naturally lower in fat and high in satiating protein, making them a great choice to spread on crackers, have with veggie sticks or in a salad.



Smoothies - using milk or yoghurt as a base, add some fresh fruit and blend for a simple speedy smoothie. For extra protein, add in some chia seeds or a scoop of a natural protein powder. There are many dairy free milks and yoghurts available these days too, such as almond milk, rice milk, coconut milk and oat milk.



NUT AND SEED SNACKS

High in heart-healthy fats, protein, fiber and vitamins, nuts and seeds are little nutritional powerhouses!

Almonds - an excellent source of vitamin E, a handful of almonds (raw or dry roasted is best) or a tablespoon of almond butter will put a stop to your hunger.

Walnuts - there's a reason these look like little brains - they are chockers with omega-3 fats, proven to assist with cognitive function and help protect the heart. What a great excuse to have a handful at your desk to get you through the afternoon!

Peanut Butter - check the label and go for the ones made with 100% peanuts. Spread on top of apple slices, celery sticks or grainy crackers.

Seeds - pumpkin and sunflower seeds are the perfect addition to homemade trail mix - simply combine some nuts, seeds, flaked coconut and whatever dried fruit you like and you have your own trail mix. Portion it up in snap lock bags or small containers and take with you for a quick and delicious snack.

Tahini - made from ground up sesame seeds, tahini is a delicious paste and a nice alternative to peanut butter. Hulled tahini (the bitter hull is removed in processing) can be used as a sweet or savoury snack - add it to mashed chickpeas to make hommus, mix it with maple syrup and cacao powder to make it a sweet dip, or pop a dollop in the middle of a pitted date for a tasty, caramelly pick-me-up, perfect to beat that afternoon slump! You can also make your own 'bliss balls' using dates for sweetness, and blending them with coconut, any nuts and seeds you desire and cacao powder for a chocolatey hit. Roll the mix into balls and keep in the fridge.



CARBOHYDRATE SNACKS

Wholegrain Crackers - these can be a great convenient snack and are easy to store and prepare. You can go as plain or as crazy as you like with what you top them with! Try cheddar cheese and sliced tomato; peanut butter and sliced banana; homemade guacamole; cream cheese, pesto and tomato...the list goes on! You can also use cucumber discs in place of the crackers for an even healthier version.

Corn/rice Thins - made from puffed rice or corn (these days there is a huge variety out there - everything from puffed quinoa, rye, multigrain etc), these are another good substitute for those who are gluten free or prefer a lighter cracker.

PROTEIN SNACKS

Eggs - hardboiled eggs are a fantastic high protein and filling snack. Boil up a batch at the start of the week and have them just as they are or slice and pop on top of a cracker for a more sustaining snack.

Tinned Tuna/Salmon - small tins of tuna and salmon are excellent! You get a great dose of protein and healthy fats, they store well and are easy to prepare with their pull-off lids. There are a great variety of flavours available which can be eaten straight from the tin or tossed through a salad, pasta or rice, or on top of crackers.

Protein Shake - we always recommend you go for whole foods for optimum health, but a good protein powder can be a convenient alternative if you don't have time to prepare anything else. Simply add a scoop of powder to plain water or your choice of milk (cow, soy, nut, rice, coconut etc) in a shaker and shake away for a quick and healthy snack. There are many different brands out there - be careful when selecting as many of them are full of additives, fillers and chemicals. Do your research and go for the all natural brands, such as Bare Blends, Amazonia, 180 Nutrition or Sun Warrior, to name a few.



Healthy Snack Recipes

For some healthy snack inspiration and cooking tips, check out these websites:

www.healthyfoodguide.com.au

www.heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/

www.iquitsugar.com/recipe/



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