

# Smart Snacking

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you set specific nutrition goals and guide you in planning a personalized healthy eating pattern.

To find an RDN in your area, visit "Find an Expert" at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education, and advocacy.

Copyright © 2017 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

**eat right.** Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



Did you know that snacking can be good for you? Smart snacks help boost your energy between meals. They supply important nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, and fiber, and they help keep your appetite stable between meals. Smart snacking means choosing healthy foods from the food groups in amounts that are right for you.

## Who Benefits from Snacking?

Snacking is a personal choice, but many people can benefit from balanced and healthy snacks:

- **Growing children** who do not eat enough at meals can get more calories and nutrients from snacks. Most toddlers get a third of their daily calories from snacks.
- **Active adults** can fuel their workouts by choosing snacks that contain carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, dairy foods, beans, and foods made from whole grains).
- **Teenagers** can get calories and nutrients from snacks to support their fast-growing bodies.
- **Pregnant and breastfeeding women** can get extra protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber from healthy snacks.
- **Older adults** who eat smaller meals can eat snacks to help get more nutrients.
- **People trying to lose or maintain weight** can include snacks to help curb hunger and prevent overeating at meals.

## Make the Most of Your Snacks

Choose your snacks wisely. Some snacks, such as chips, candy, and cookies, have added fat, sodium, and sugar and can be high in calories. Healthy snacks have vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber, and they fit in your daily calorie budget. Here are some smart snacking tips:

- **Plan ahead.** Pack fruit, vegetables, or other healthy snacks in your lunchbox, backpack, or briefcase. Pack dairy foods and lean meats in a cooler with ice or an insulated bag.
- **Avoid mindless snacking.** Eat a snack without doing anything else (like watching TV) at the same time. Snack only when you feel hungry, not when you feel bored or stressed.
- **Keep portion control in mind.** Portion your snacks before you eat. Eating directly from the package or container can lead to overeating.
- **Be aware of what is in your snack.** Some healthy-sounding snacks, such as energy bars or granola bars, microwave popcorn, and trail mix, can have more calories, saturated fat, sodium, or added sugars than you think. Compare food labels when shopping for snacks, and check the serving sizes and nutrients, too.

