



Feature Article: Wellness Snacking

It's not uncommon to make a choice to eat healthier and succeed with the three major meals of the day but struggle when it comes to snacking. The western diet of convenience has created options that are detrimental to our health. With a few minor changes in your habits, you can snack healthy.

Suggestion #1 – Note the nutrition factor. The best snack will not be full of sugar and empty calories but instead will be the perfect balance of fiber, protein, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and healthy carbohydrates. Also, remember not to get stuck in a rut. Don't eat the same snack every day, no matter how healthy it is, mix it up.

Suggestion #2 – Preparation is key. If the snacks are already prepared and easy to grab, your family will be more likely to choose that option over a bag of chips or crackers. Peel, cut, chop and prep any of the following for your family's on-the-go snacking needs. These items can include: sliced red peppers; grapes; celery sticks; peanut, almond and cashew butter; hummus; almonds or cashews. It doesn't seem like there would be a significant difference between a sliced apple and a whole one but there is: your family will be quicker to eat a sliced apple, especially when there are dipping options.

Suggestion #3 – A delivered plate is a clean plate. If you're concerned about the snacking choices your family is making then prepare a snack for them. If you know that your kids are going to raid the fridge while doing homework then plan a preemptive strike and deliver a snack plate to them that contains what you want them to be eating.

Suggestion #4 – Similarly, if the plate looks appetizing your family is more likely to eat what's on it, even if it's not their favorite snack. Consider providing snack choices on BPA-free plastic plates shaped like animals. These can be found at thefind.com, amazon.com and other online stores. For older children, instead of cutting off a chunk of cheese consider slicing the cheese and placing it on a plate with a little handful of almonds, a small mound of pickled beets and some gluten-free crackers.

Suggestion #5 – Read the labels. It's important to try new foods but the quality of those foods is vital. Avoid foods that list sugar in any form (high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup or brown rice syrup) in the first four ingredients and any that contain partially hydrogenated oils.

Always make sure that your snacks are healthy for you and your family.



Source: motherearthliving.com

Healthy Snack Ingredients

If a snack is going to be the compliment to a healthy diet then it needs to provide a wide range of vitamins and nutrients within a specific number of calories. Empty calories are just that: a waste.

The number of calories you allot to a snack should be based on the number of calories you should be eating in a day. For a quick and easy calorie calculator go to the Mayo Clinic's website at: Mayoclinic.com/health/calorie-calculator/nu00598

For a healthy snack consider that 45-65% of your calories should be protein and lean meats, 20-35% should be healthy green vegetables and 10-15% should be limited to fruits, grains and healthy carbohydrates.

The best ingredients for your snacks should include:

- 4 small carrots
- 1 oz cheddar cheese
- ½ cup quinoa
- 2 gluten-free crackers
- Medium apple
- 1 oz almonds
- Large zucchini
- 3 tbsp black bean dip
- 2 ½ tbsp. hummus
- 1 tbsp raw uncooked honey
- 1 oz unsalted cashews
- 3 ounces baked sweet potato chips

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Light and Lively Lima Bean Dip

Healthy dips are a great way to change up the typical snack of carrot or celery sticks.

Ingredients

- Two 10-ounce packages frozen baby lima beans
- 1 medium onion, chopped (optional)
- 1 vegetable bouillon cube
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 2 cups water
- 1 tsp dried cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp minced fresh dill or 1 tsp dried
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 3 tbsp plus 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil or coconut oil
- ¼ cup sour cream
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt to taste
- ¼ cup minced red bell pepper, for garnish
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges, for garnish

TO PREPARE: In a saucepan, simmer beans, onion bouillon and lemon peel in water until beans are soft, about 8 minutes. Drain; return to pot and mash. Add herbs, pepper, garlic, 3 tbsp oil and sour cream, stirring to combine. Stir in lemon juice. Add salt to taste. Put in serving bowl and cool to room temperature. To serve, drizzle with remaining oil, sprinkle with bell pepper and place lemon alongside. Good for 3 days if kept covered and chilled.

Source: motherearthliving.com