

Myth: Snacking is Bad for You

Adapted from *Smart Snacking* by Louise Chang, MD <http://www.webmd.com>



Volume LXXII * March 10, 2008

Note: To reflect this year's National Nutrition Month theme, 'Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact', the Eat Smart newsletters for the month of March will focus on nutrition myths that can trip you up.

TRUTH: Snacking itself is not bad for us. Rather, it's all the junk food people like to snack on that gives snacking a bad name: chips, candy bars, french fries, soda, and so on. Healthful snacking including carbohydrates and protein, like whole-grain crackers with low-fat cheese or fat free yogurt with fresh fruit, can help your body stay fueled so you will be less inclined to overeat at your next meal.

FIVE TIPS FOR SMART SNACKING:

- 1. Only snack when you need to.** Not hungry? Don't snack!
- 2. Avoid Trans fats.** Anything with "partially hydrogenated oil" listed on the ingredient list is suspect.
- 3. Limit your portions.** Snacks should be no more than 100 – 200 calories:
 - Pear with reduced-fat cheese
 - Apple or celery with peanut butter
 - A handful of almonds and dried fruit
 - 1 ounce whole grain crackers with hummus or light cheese
 - Low-fat or nonfat yogurt with 1/2 cup fruit, 1/4 cup low-fat granola
- 4. Be aware of liquid calories.** If you wash down your snack with a fruit drink or soda, you're likely adding an additional 100 + calories. Some smarter beverage choices include:
 - Water
 - 100% fruit juice
 - Diet sodas
 - Low-fat/non-fat milk or soy milk
 - Tea
- 5. Be careful with energy bars.** They are oftentimes loaded with calories and sugar.
 - Look for at least 5 grams of protein (preferably 10 g), 3 grams of fiber (preferably 5 g), and fewer than 10 grams of sugar.

