

# Create Healthy-Snack Habits



## CHALLENGE

Satisfy your hunger with healthy snacks

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Create Healthy-Snack Habits."
2. Create a plan to eat healthy snacks.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



Ever had a snack attack?<sup>1</sup> It usually looks something like this...

At the end of a long day, you plop down in front of the TV with a bowl of ice cream.

When mid-afternoon rolls around, you take a trip to the vending machine for a candy bar, chips, and

soda. Maybe all three.

Every time you take a road trip, it's fueled by quickie-mart fare and fast food.

When you go grocery shopping, you toss "junk food" into your cart (chips, candy, cookies, soda, etc), and open a bag on your way home.

Sometimes you hit the drive-thru for a little something extra... after you've already had dinner.

And later you realize you've munched your way through a ton of empty calories. That ever happen?

For some people snacking might mean devouring an apple, baked kale chips, or a leafy-green salad washed down with a glass of water. If you're already a healthy snacker, keep it up.

But if you think your snack food choices may be to blame for packing on a few pounds or linked to other health problems, you can make a change.<sup>2</sup>

If you're thinking, "Yeah, right," you're not alone. But don't worry. There ARE lots of healthy snacks that taste good AND satisfy cravings. Take the month-long challenge to Create Healthy-Snack Habits.

## Snack-Attack Survey

Are you a healthy snacker? Take the survey to find out.



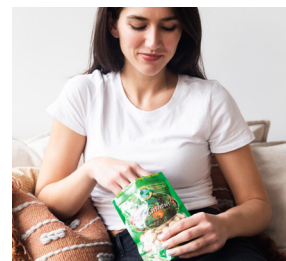
### Y N

1.   When I have a snack-food craving, I usually eat whatever sounds good
2.   I know someone who eats healthy snacks, but I think it takes too much time to eat that way.
3.   I don't usually pay attention to food labels or serving sizes when I have a snack.
4.   When I take a road trip, I eat whatever is available at gas stations, restaurants, and convenient stores.
5.   I have a stash of candy bars, cookies, soda, chips and sweets at home/work.

How did you do? If you answered "yes" to any of these statements, your snack-food habits could be better. Snacking can be a good way to control calories, manage your weight, and improve your health. But only if you eat the right snacks. Want to make a change? Now is always the best time to start.

## STOP...Are You Really Hungry?

Think about this question the next time you get the urge to tear open a bag of chips. Are you really hungry?

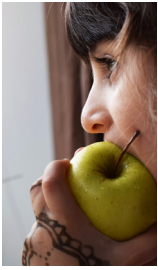


You might snack out of habit or because you're bored. Or maybe you need a snack to keep your blood sugar levels normal. Not sure? Keep a record of the snacks you eat and time of day you eat them. Then see if you can spot a pattern:

- Do you snack late at night, while stuck in a traffic jam, or in the afternoon?
- Do you find yourself reaching for snacks when you're tired, stressed, or feeling lonely?
- When you do decide to have a snack, is it healthy, planned, or impulsive?

Taking a closer look at your snack habits can help. And making small changes and simple swaps may be just the thing.<sup>3</sup>

Revamp your snacking habits <http://tinyurl.com/hvjoo6z>



## 4 Rules for Healthier Snacks

So what's a healthy snack look like? Don't worry...you've got options. Follow these 4 rules:

1. **1-2 snacks between meals** if you're feeling hungry.
2. **100 calories or less** per snack (read the food label or look it up).
3. Choose snacks with a bit of **protein, fiber and fat**.
4. **Fresh is best** (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, water).



## The Truth About Late-Night Snacking

It's a recipe for weight gain, high blood sugar, and other health problems, according

to a recent study.<sup>4</sup>

Researchers tracked the eating habits of a group of people for 16 weeks. They ate 3 meals and two snacks per day. During the first eight weeks, they ate between 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. The next eight weeks, they ate from noon to 11 p.m.

Researchers found that eating and snacking later:

- Slowed metabolism
- Increased weight gain
- Stored more fat
- Elevated blood sugar, cholesterol, and triglycerides
- Negatively altered hormones linked to hunger and appetite

There's nothing wrong with having a snack. It might be just the thing to help you make better food choices. But research suggests snacking after dinner or before bed won't help you tip the scale in the right direction.



## Prepare for a Snack Attack

If you don't have a plan when a craving hits, there's a good chance you'll default to your old ways.

But it doesn't have to be like that. You just need to be prepared.

If you reach a point during the day that calls for a snack, make it a healthy one.

- **Plan ahead.** Make a list of healthier snacks you actually enjoy.
- **Stock up** on healthy snacks, and avoid heading to the vending machine, drive-thru or quickie-mart to satisfy a craving.
- **If you do give into junk food cravings,** and munch your way through some sweet treats or less-than healthy snacks, don't consider it a free pass to keep eating junk. Just get back on track.

99 healthy-snack recipes  
<http://tinyurl.com/zffb5et>

What makes a healthy snack?  
<http://tinyurl.com/jtq8deu>

## Your Guide to Healthy-Snack Foods

Wondering how to create healthy-snack habits? Swap the junk food for healthier snacks, like this:



### Cool as ice

- Fruit-juice popsicle
- No-sugar-added fudgsicle
- 1 small scoop of frozen yogurt
- 1 cup of fat-free pudding

### Protein power

- 1 hard-boiled egg
- String cheese
- Non-fat Greek yogurt
- Cup of skim or soy milk
- Tuna packet
- Jerky

### On-the-go

- Trail mix
- Pretzels
- Dry cereal (no sugar added)
- Rice cakes (with a healthy topping like peanut butter, hummus, or sugar-free jam)

### Drink of choice

- Water
- 1 glass of low-sodium tomato juice
- Smoothie made with fruit, spinach, yogurt, non-fat milk or soy milk, and ice

### Crunch & munch

- Celery sticks with peanut butter
- Sliced cucumber, bell pepper, or carrots
- Whole-grain crackers with hummus
- Air-popped popcorn

### Sweet dreams

- Small banana
- Cup of strawberries
- Half a grapefruit
- Dried fruit



Got a craving for a snack? Toss out the junk food and stock up on healthy options. You'll satisfy your cravings without eating a ton of empty calories. You'll feel better and be healthier, too.

## References

1. Thomas, C., et al. (2016). Abundance, control and water! water! water! *Food, Culture & Society*, 19(2): 251-271. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y6tgpbw4>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Improving your eating habits. From: <https://tinyurl.com/852gk52>
3. Cadario, R., et al. (2019). Which healthy eating nudges work best? A meta-analysis of field experiments. *Marketing Science*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y46l2rhn>
4. Allison, K., et al. (2018). Timing of eating in adults across the weight spectrum: Metabolic factors and potential circadian mechanisms. *Physiology & Behavior*, 192: 158-166. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y26gvxgt>





# Create Healthy-Snack Habits

## CHALLENGE

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### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you eat healthy snacks.
3. Use the calendar to record the actions and choices you make to create healthy-snack habits.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you take steps to Create Healthy Snack Habits. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____		
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\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I ate healthy snacks  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

### Other wellness projects completed this month:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_