



Snacking—the right way—can be key to controlling your blood sugar

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Snacking has a bad reputation that may go all the way back to the origins of the word—from the 14th century Dutch *snacken*, meaning to bite like a dog—but, in fact, healthy snacking is essential to managing your blood sugar if you have diabetes. Why? You don't want to get too hungry between meals, because that means larger breakfasts, lunches or dinners, which can throw your glucose levels out of whack. Instead, it's better to have moderate-sized main meals and a healthy snack every two to three hours to keep blood sugar levels in the right range.

What's a Healthy Snack?

The trick for someone with diabetes lies in avoiding impulse snacks loaded with carbohydrates and high in sugar. Your snacks should be easy to digest, with no more than 15 to 45 grams of carbohydrates per serving. **Try a few of these at-home, easy-to-make snack recipes, courtesy of [everydayhealth.com](https://www.everydayhealth.com):**

Sugar-free hot cocoa made with dark chocolate

This one is especially good on cold winter days! All you need for this drink is one cup of fat free milk blended with one packet of sugar-free dark chocolate cocoa mix. Mix and microwave or place in a saucepan on the stovetop.

Oatmeal and berries

Take a cup of plain, unflavored oatmeal, preferably steel-cut, since instant oatmeal is high on the glycemic index (an indicator of how quickly a food can make your blood sugar rise). Top it off with a quarter cup of your favorite berries and you have a filling snack that has the added benefit of keeping your blood sugar stable.

Fruit and cheese

To appease your sweet tooth, try half a banana, a small orange, a peach or an apple with reduced fat cheese.

Frozen whole-grain waffle with yogurt and cinnamon

Toast one waffle, add three tablespoons of low-fat, plain Greek yogurt and dust with cinnamon.

Hummus and whole grain crackers

For a healthy and tasty snack, spread one to two tablespoons of hummus evenly over thin, whole-grain crackers and serve with slices of tomato for a vitamin C boost.

Peanut butter and jelly

When all else fails, go back to childhood. Peanut butter is a good snack for people with diabetes, since it reduces hunger and can decrease glucose levels. Try one tablespoon on half a high-fiber, whole-grain English-muffin and top it off with one tablespoon of sugar-free jelly.

Flavorful popcorn

Make three cups of popcorn (from an air popper, if possible). Add some black pepper or parmesan cheese.



Snack Tips

Try to eat snacks at the same time each day

If possible, spread your carb intake evenly throughout the day, which will give you a consistent supply of energy and help control your blood sugar.

Prepare Ahead

In order to avoid over-snacking, make snacks ahead of time and place them in airtight containers. Try never to eat directly out of snack bags or boxes.

Watch for Sodium Content

Since many people with diabetes are susceptible to heart disease and/or high blood pressure, it's best to keep snacks low-salt or salt-free.

Bedtime Snacking?

Doctors generally warn against bedtime snacks, since the extra calories can lead to weight gain. But when it comes to people with diabetes who take insulin or other diabetes medications, a small Greek yogurt or a handful of nuts before bed may help prevent low blood sugar from occurring during the night.

Getting the Family on Board

Of course, it's sometimes hard to stick to a healthy diet if you have family members filling spare corners of the cupboard with the sweet and salty snacks you're trying to avoid. **One solution is to try involving your spouse and/or kids in healthy eating by:**

Providing Information

Share with your family why and how you're changing your snacking habits, explaining to them the ways in which it can benefit your health.

Inviting Them into the Kitchen

Show your loved ones how you prepare snacks—and let them taste them and perhaps provide their own tips and preferences. This is a great way to increase family time and show family members that healthy does not have to mean boring or tasteless.

Trying to Be Patient

If you meet resistance, so be it. You can't force other people to adopt healthy eating habits. You can only provide a living example of the benefits.



Sources: <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000322.htm> | <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/blog/smart-snacking-when-you-have-diabetes/> | <https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/articles/healthy-snacking-with-diabetes-tips-and-recipes.html> | <https://www.everydayhealth.com/type-2-diabetes/diet/diabetes-snacks/> | <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/expert-answers/diabetes/faq-20058372> | <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/best-snacks-for-diabetes> | https://www.cnr.msu.edu/news/the_importance_of_snacking_when_you_have_diabetes | <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/expert-answers/diabetes/faq-20058372#:~:text=If%20you%20have%20diabetes%2C%20late,can%20lead%20to%20weight%20gain.>

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