Snacks: Who Needs Them?

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Outline

- Who benefits?
- Pros and cons of snacking
- Make snacking work for you
Who Benefits from Snacking?

- Growing children/teenagers
- Pregnant women
- Older adults
  - Those who can only eat small portions at one time
- Physically active people
  - A.k.a. exercisers
  - YOU – possibly... hopefully...

Pros & Cons

Research so far...

Pros
- Improved blood lipids (TC, LDL-C, apolipoprotein B)
- May improve insulin resistance
- Improved satiety – eat less later
- Smaller stomach capacity – feeling satisfied with less food over time
- Providing a small boost in metabolism between spread out meals

Cons

- Often people snack on high-calorie, high-fat foods
  - Come up short on nutrients and overdo calories

- Snacking when not hungry may promote weight gain

- Any metabolic advantage from snacking or eating more frequent meals disappears if the calorie intake goes up.

Pros & Cons

The Bottom Line

- More research is needed
- Avoid cycle of starving and stuffing
  - Skipping meals appears to increase desire for foods with a high energy density
- Focus on eating low calorie-density foods (whole grains, beans, fruits, vegetables) and eating only when hungry
  - Provides more satiety per calorie
  - Aids weight loss without constantly battling hunger

Make Snacking Work for You

- **Plan Ahead!!**
- Keep snacks handy for times when you typically need them
  - Desk at work
  - Car glove compartment
  - Gym bag
  - Home cupboards, fridge, and/or freezer
- This can help you avoid making less-healthy choices from vending machines, convenience stores, co-worker’s candy jars, etc.

Make Snacking Work for You

- **Snack Consciously!!**
  - Nibbling mindlessly or out of emotion or habit can lead to overeating
  - Eat a single snack and avoid grazing over time
  - Eat your snack without doing anything else at the same time
  - Do not eat right out of the bag or container
    - Dish out portions and put the rest away
  - Buy small packs or individually wrapped servings
  - No nibbling – tasting while cooking, free samples, finishing your kids meals

Make Snacking Work for You

- Choose Nutrient-Dense Foods

- Don’t think of snacks as “extras,” choose healthy snacks from different food groups

- Balance food choices for the day
  - You can still have “fun foods”
  - For example, if you snack on two chocolate chip cookies, choose chicken-vegetable stir-fry for dinner rather than fried chicken and creamy slaw

Make Snacking Work for You

- **Choose Nutrient-Dense Foods**
  
  - Healthy foods tend to provide more satiety with fewer calories
  
  - Fruits
  
  - Vegetables
  
  - Whole-grain products
    - Choose foods high in fiber
  
  - Low-fat dairy products
  
  - Lean protein sources (lean meats, soy products, beans)

- Limit foods high in fat and added sugar

# Make Snacking Work for You

## Choose Nutrient-Dense Foods

- **This Snack...**
  - bagel
  - bran muffin
  - carrot
  - broccoli
  - cantaloupe
  - banana
  - yogurt
  - cottage cheese
  - canned tuna
  - refried beans

- **Supplies...**
  - thiamine
  - fiber
  - vitamin A
  - vitamin C
  - vitamin A
  - vitamin B6
  - calcium
  - protein
  - niacin
  - iron

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Make Snacking Work for You

- Be Portion and Label Savvy
  - Eat small, snack-sized portions
    - If you are hungry enough for a large snack, balance this with a smaller meal later.
  - Be aware that some snack foods contain more calories, fat, and sugar than you may expect
    - “energy bars,” granola bars, microwave popcorn, trail mix
  - Read food labels

Summary

- Active people often need snacks
- Snacking has many benefits if it doesn’t lead to extra calorie intake
- Snack ONLY when hungry
- Snack consciously
- Choose healthful, nutrient-dense snacks that are balanced with your day’s intake

Any Questions??

(Don’t forget to get your weight checked this month!!!)