



Fuel your body
with smart snacks

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Fuel Your Body With Smart Snacks

Snacking can be part of an overall healthy way of eating. A smart snack can fill nutrient gaps, help you manage munchies, balance your mood and energize you!

A snack is different from a treat.

A chocolate bar is a treat. An apple is a snack.

My 4 Top Tips for Smart Snacking

1. Snack when you are actually hungry. Ask yourself: "Am I truly hungry or am I looking for a break from work or am I bored, tired, sad or stressed?" If you're not hungry, a snack won't satisfy you.
 - Do you reach for a sweet treat when you're stressed? You're not alone! [Check out my strategies to stop stress eating.](#)
2. Choose nutrient-rich, real food snacks such as veggies, fruit, hard-cooked eggs, nuts, edamame or yogurt.
3. Keep portions realistic to match your hunger and energy needs.
 - Size Matters: Portion size is key when it comes to healthy snacking; smaller, pre-portioned snacks are always better than eating right out of a big bag (you tend to eat more out of bigger packages).
4. Snack mindfully. Often times we snack distracted; we eat while texting, driving, watching TV or scrolling through social media. Mindless munching can lead to over nibbling. When you snack, put distractions aside, pay attention to what you're eating and savour your snack.

Hi, I'm Shannon Crocker, registered dietitian, nutrition communications consultant, lover of smart snacks and living a vibrant life!

I'm sharing some snackspiration so you can join me in smart snacking too!

For more snacking recipes, visit the [Be Simply Vibrant Blog](#)

Vibrantly Yours,
Shannon



What I Look for In A Smart Snack

I look for snacks made mostly with whole foods that provide staying power with a good amount of protein, some fibre, quality carbs, and healthy fats. So, that means snacks made with ingredients like nuts and seeds, whole grains, dairy, pulses, and veggies and fruits.

What's a "quality carb"?

I consider that a carbohydrate food that's naturally rich in nutrients, like fruit, vegetables, plain Greek yogurt, whole grains. Quality carbs may have natural sugars (e.g. fruit, milk); they aren't jam-packed with added sugar.

How about "healthy fats"?

The type of fat you choose may be more important than the amount. Most often, choose snack foods that give you more unsaturated such as nuts, seeds, avocado, and nut butters.

CHEW ON THIS: I definitely do not avoid wholesome foods that have some saturated fat, such as cheese or full fat yogurt. Why? Well, I love the taste! PLUS... these whole foods give you nutrients, such as potassium and vitamin B12, that are key to healthy hearts and brains. So, a little full flavoured Canadian cheddar cheese with an apple is an A+ snack in my books!

Set up For Success

Put real food ingredients on your grocery list so that you've got the basics on hand to build smart snacks.

Do some simple snack prep at the beginning of each week, such as:

- Pre-portion nuts and seeds into small, single-serving containers.
- Hard-cook some eggs (they last in the fridge for a week).
- Clean and chop fresh veggies and fruit (but don't wash berries until you're ready to eat them).
- Make energy bites or whole grain muffins for the freezer.
- Assemble a few small Greek yogurt and fruit parfaits in to-go containers.



Smart Snacking: Veggies & Fruits

I recommend you snack on veggies and fruit more often; not only will you get lots of plant-based nutrients for optimal health, but a recent study found that eating lots of fruits and vegetables might help to lower stress, especially for women! *

Aim for each snack to include a veggie or fruit. Add some protein, and you've got a satisfying snack that will power you through an afternoon.

Keep it Simple:

- Make movie night snack a few handfuls of sugar snap peas and a scoop of hummus.
- Toss a cut up carrot and a hard-cooked egg into your lunch bag.
- Top a scoop of cottage cheese with chopped grape tomatoes and green onion.
- Top plain Greek yogurt with berries and walnuts.
- Add an apple, banana, orange or a couple of dates to your gym bag for a pre-workout snack.
- Put a big plate of fresh veggies and dip on the table before dinner.
- Pack a turkey and veggie snack jar when you're needing a mini meal on the go.

Set up For Success

Wash and cut up a couple days' worth of veggies and put them at eye level at the front of the fridge, so that the healthy choice is the easy choice.

Cut up fruit such as watermelon or cantaloupe, but don't wash fruits such as grapes or berries until just before you are about to eat them.



Sources

Medical News Today: Eating fruits and vegetables may lower women's stress risk. <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/316414.php>

Are Smoothies a Smart Snack?

For the most part, I'm a fan of eating whole veggies and fruit versus drinking your produce. Whole food is more satiating than the liquid version and you can drink a lot of calories pretty quickly if you go for the biggie-size cup – especially if we're talking about store bought smoothies.

Having said that, smoothies can be a fantastic way to jam a whole lot of goodness into one cup!

Take my Blueberry Blast Smoothie - recipe just a few pages away:

- It's packed with whole foods that provide nutrients to promote immune system health including vitamin C, folate, vitamin B12 and vitamin D.
- The kefir adds a hit of good probiotic bacteria to keep your gut healthy (also linked to immunity).
- The ground flax gives a little plant-based omega-3, and the blueberries give you vitamin C — both are nutrients that can help keep skin healthy.
- There's super snacking satisfaction: The fruit, flax and oats offer fibre. The milk, kefir and yogurt provide protein. That combo helps you stay satisfied and energized!
- It's got greens – and we can all use a little more green in our day to help keep our hearts healthy!
- Each serving has less than 200 calories (about 170), 29 grams of quality carbs and 10 grams of protein, making it perfect as post workout fuel to re-energize and refuel muscles.



Sources

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7 Simple Smart Snacks To Satisfy Your Savoury Cravings

1. Hard-cooked eggs. Top a protein-packed hard-cooked egg with a dab of sriracha mayonnaise (sriracha sauce + mayo). Enjoy with a big handful of grape tomatoes – they go well with the sriracha mayo too!
2. Avocado. Enjoy half a small avocado squirted with a big juicy wedge of lime and a sprinkle of coarse sea salt. The healthy fat in the avocado is digested slowly, helping to keep you satisfied.
3. Whole grain crackers (e.g. Triscuits) topped with a little pesto, a sliver of Parmesan, and tuna (I prefer Italian tuna packed in oil for best flavour and texture. I just drain off the oil and eat it right out of the can!).
4. Roasted Veggies. When you want veggies, but not the crunch, go roasted. Drizzle cauliflower, broccoli or carrot pieces with olive oil and roast at 425 for about 30 minutes. Drizzle with tahini (sesame butter) or dip in hummus.
5. Popcorn. Pop it, spritz it with olive oil, sprinkle it with sea salt and pepper. Add some nutritional yeast, a little granulated garlic or citrusy-tasting sumac for a flavour twist. Popcorn is a whole grain that provides fibre to keep you full and satisfies your craving for a crunchy snack.
6. Edamame. Steam frozen edamame (in the pod or shelled) and drizzle with sesame oil, toasted sesame seeds and sea salt.
7. Loaded hummus. This is like a party in your mouth and a delicious dip that will have you wanting to eat more vegetables. How to make loaded hummus coming up on page 13.



My 5 Favourite Simple Smart Sweet Snacks

1. Dark chocolate. Choose the most flavourful version; a few bites will give you all the taste you desire without going overboard. Enjoy a piece with a small handful of almonds or pistachios for staying power.
2. Chocolate Peanut Butter Fruit Dip. Fresh fruit on its own is a great snack if you need a wee nibble, but add in a protein-packed dip and you'll have more long-lasting snacking satisfaction. Recipe on page 15.
3. Dates. They call them nature's candy for a reason. Dates are naturally sweet, but they're also rich in fibre and potassium. Fill a couple of dates with almond butter for more hunger-crushing goodness.
4. Greek Yogurt and Raspberries. Plain Greek yogurt topped with slightly warm, defrosted frozen berries is a sweet snacking sensation filled with goodness.
5. Cereal with milk. A small bowl of whole grain cereal is basic but tasty. I like Shredded Wheat with a sprinkle of raisins or chopped dates for natural sweetness. I also like Mini Wheats Original; even though it is sweetened, I look at the entire nutritional package a food provides: and a serving of this 100% whole grain cereal has 6 grams of fibre and a whopping 50% of your daily value of iron!

A WORD ON SWEETS... Homemade oatmeal cookies, dark chocolate pumpkin snacking cake, flourless peanut butter cookies, whole grain muffin or almond butter energy bites – I have one of these in the kitchen most of the time. While some are actually more of a treat (cookies and snack cake) than a snack, they are better than sugar-bomb pre-made versions.



My Top 10 Smart Grab & Go Smart Snacks

You might have heard to avoid all packaged foods; well, I'm here to tell you...that's just not true. There are many nutrient-rich foods that come in packages. You don't need to avoid them all; you just need to know how to navigate the plethora of packages to find the healthy choice.

10 pre-packaged snacks that are actually good for you!

- 1. FRESH FRUIT.** Okay, so technically fruit isn't packaged, but it's a quick pick up at the grocery store and the ultimate travel snack. Fruits like apples, pears and blueberries aren't messy and travel well.
- 2. SUGAR SNAP PEAS.** I power through these babies. Super crunchy, filled with fibre and low calorie. Really, any veggie would be great but these require no peeling, washing or chopping. You can crunch on a small bag of Mann's sugar snaps for under 100 calories (and they are great with hummus).
- 3. NUT-BASED BARS.** Look for ones that are lower in added sugars and made with whole foods ingredients. My current faves are Kind Bars (try the Almond Sea Salt & Dark Chocolate), Larabars (Peanut Butter, of course! The sugar comes solely from dates in that bar) and HoneyBar (they are a Canadian bar that is sweetened with, well, you know, honey!).
- 4. POPCORN.** Popcorn is a whole grain that gives you gut-loving fibre. Skinny Pop and Pur (available at Winners) are my go-to brands; they are lightly salted and made with only 3 ingredients: popcorn, oil and salt. Simple!
- 5. NUTS AND TRAIL MIX.** Super nutritious and good staying power from protein, fat and fibre. One small handful is serving. Look for mixes that aren't filled with chocolate or candy. Toss a handful in a small container so you won't be tempted to mindlessly munch through the whole bag of trail mix.



My Top 10 Smart Grab & Go Smart Snacks

6. **CRUNCHY ROASTED CHICKPEAS.** If you like to nibble more than a handful of something, roasted chickpeas are a better choice for you than nuts because they're much lower in calories. Try The Three Farmers brand; it's a Canadian company. (You can find this brand at Winners!)
7. **GREEK YOGURT.** Packed with protein for staying power! One little bit of trickiness...you need to make sure to bring some spoons. Starbucks typically has Liberte Greek yogurt (and spoons!) so you can grab one when you stop for a coffee.
8. **EGGS2GO!** Hardboiled Snack Pack. Burnbrae Farms packs up two hardboiled eggs, peeled and ready to eat. Look for them in the prepared salad section in the grocery store.
9. **CHEESE.** Cheese packs or sticks offer long lasting snacking satisfaction due to protein. I like the Balderson cheddar packs – you can get these at Costco or the grocery store. Starbucks carries cheese strings too.
10. **HUMMUS.** You can find individual packs (Sabre packs hummus with pretzels) or buy the shareable container at the grocery store. The perfect dip for those snap peas listed above!



Brilliant Snacking: Blueberries on Peanut Butter on Apple

Imagine blueberries on top of a thick slice of crisp apple slathered with natural peanut butter. It's like jam, only a thousand times better!

Not only does this combo satisfy my sweet snack cravings, but it's also filled with all sorts of goodness that I look for in a nourishing snack.

3 Reasons I ♥ This Snack

1. I love blueberries for the taste for sure, but nutritionally speaking, these little vibrant blue berries are a smart snack choice:
 - They are packed with potentially brain-boosting antioxidants. Not a fan of blueberries? I recommend eating a serving of berries (any kind) every day.
 - One cup (250mL) has just 87 calories and 4 grams of fibre, making them an ideal snack, especially if you're trying to manage a healthy weight.
 - They are an excellent source of vitamin C – which is important for the health of your heart, gums (smile!), skin and immune system.
2. This snack provides quality carbs and fibre (from fruit), protein and healthy fats (from the peanut butter). A couple of big slices are super satisfying!
3. The apples are health promoting too! Aside from the basic nutrients, in vitro studies (think test tube) and animal studies show that apples have a high antioxidant capacity and could play a role in reducing risk for cancer and heart disease. We don't yet truly know the apple's antioxidant impact on human health; association" isn't a guarantee and the link between diet and health is complex. But, eating an apple a day can't hurt and could help



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Smart Sipping

When it comes to snacking, sometimes you are actually not hungry, but thirsty instead (or bored, or tired, or sad or binge-watching Netflix), and a glass of water is all you need. Before you nibble, ask yourself if you are hungry or thirsty.

If you truly are hungry, then eat! If you think you might be thirsty, sip some water.

Drinking enough water is important for optimal health, including helping with digestion and regularity (ahem, poops) – two processes that you might notice change a little as you age. Being well hydrated also helps you feel healthy and energized.

So, sipping on water during the day is a good habit to get into.

Your water doesn't have to have lemon in it, but go ahead if it means you'll enjoy drinking a big ol' glass. (Side bar...although there are no magical properties to lemony water for fat burning, lemons do contain vitamin C and other antioxidants that are being studied for health benefits.)

I ♥ fruit infused water!

Adding fruit to your water adds a hint of flavour and can help you to drink more water. Here are three of my favourite "spa water" combinations:

- cucumber slices + lime slices + fresh raspberries
- lemon slices + torn fresh mint leaves
- orange slices + pineapple wedges

Set up For Success

Put a glass of water on your bedside table, beside the kitchen sink or coffee maker the night before so you'll be prompted to fill up in the morning. After you've finished that big glass of water, move the glass to your table; it's your cue to fill up with water again at dinner.

Heading out for the day? Fill up! I take my S'well bottle filled with water wherever I go.



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RECIPES

Loaded Hummus

Spread your favourite hummus fairly thickly, onto a platter. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and top it with flavourful ingredients such as:

- Chopped kalmata olives
- Roasted red pepper
- Roasted chickpeas (I use The Good Bean brand for super crunch)
- Roasted, salted pepitas
- Grilled marinated artichokes

This is delicious with sturdy veggies like big slices of carrots and peppers, thick cucumber wedges, and celery. It's also really great with whole grain crackers, pita chips and flat pretzel crisps.

GOOD FOOD TIP: Chickpeas are super nutritious; they give you plant-based protein, fibre and heart-loving folate. If you make your own hummus with canned chickpeas, be sure to drain and rinse them to remove up to half of the sodium.

And, you can kick-up plain store bought hummus by stirring in mashed sweet potato or pureed beets.

Set up For Success

Keep food in the cupboard (or fridge), not on the counter – even more nutritious snacks like nuts. When food is within easy reach, we're more likely to grab a little something on the way by, nibbling mindlessly.

- The exception here is a fruit bowl – you might grab an apple if there's a beautiful bowlful right in front of you!
- Put healthier snack foods at the front of the cupboard or the fridge so they are the first foods you see.



Creamy Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter Dip

Servings: 4 as a snack, or for a bunch of folks as a fruit platter.

Ingredients

1 cup (250 mL) plain Greek yogurt (I use 5% MF mostly, 2% at min.)

¼ cup (60 mL) natural peanut butter

¼ cup (60 mL) cocoa

1 Tbsp (15 mL) honey (or 2 if you prefer it sweeter)

1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla

Pinch of sea salt

Optional toppings: peanut butter, chopped salted peanuts and chunks of dark chocolate

How to Make

Mix all ingredients together until well combined. Top with peanut butter, chopped salted peanuts and chunks of dark chocolate (if using). Serve with apples, pears, strawberries and bananas for dipping



Almond Butter Energy Bites

Power up with whole grain oats, almond butter and seeds! These bite-sized snacks deliver energy, protein and fibre (and a hint of chocolate) to help you crush cravings and manage munchies. They make a perfect grab-and-go snack; one of these bites with a small banana or latte powers me through a short run or quick work out.

Makes: 24 energy bites

Ingredients

1 ¼ cup (375 mL) large flake rolled oats or quick cooking steel cut oats
2/3 cup (160 mL) medium unsweetened coconut flakes
½ cup (125 mL) natural almond butter
1/3 cup (80 mL) honey
¼ cup (60 mL) sesame seeds or hemp hearts
¼ cup (60 mL) chia seeds
¼ cup (60 mL) mini chocolate chips
1 Tbsp. (15 mL) vanilla extract
Pinch sea salt

How to Make

1. Stir all ingredients together in a medium bowl until thoroughly mixed. Let chill in the refrigerator for at least half an hour. *
2. Using a tablespoon measure, scoop mix and roll into bite-sized balls.

Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

* If you don't have time to let the mix chill, don't worry. Just wet/dampen your hands slightly to make rolling less sticky.



Blueberry Blast Smoothie

Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 large banana, frozen
- 2 cups (500 mL) frozen blueberries
- 1 ½ cups lightly packed baby spinach
- 2 cups (250 mL) milk
- ½ cup (125 mL) plain, Greek yogurt (2% MF)
- ½ cup (125 mL) kefir (1%)
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) rolled oat
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) ground flax
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla (optional)

Instructions

- Puree all ingredients in a blender until smooth.
- Pour into four glasses and sip immediately!



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