

HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter
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Smart Snacking during the Holidays

Introduction

Snacking can either be a good or a bad thing. It depends on what you are eating, when you are eating it, and how much you are eating. The holidays are usually a hard time to stay healthy when it comes to the food that we eat. From the potlucks, to the dinner parties, and all the sweets in between, food is everywhere. From the end of November until January 1st, we have to be aware of what is going into our bodies and how much. It is important to snack smart throughout the holidays. In this newsletter, it will cover why it is important to snack smart, different tips to snack smart, and also gives you a few healthy snack options.



Why is it important to snack smart?

Snacking is a typical thing to do in between meals but it is important to eat snacks that are healthy. Those that are packed with sugar have no positive impact on your body. When you snack smart, it gives you energy to make it through your work/school day. Having brain power while working is key to a successful day. Smart snacking can also help you from overeating at lunch or dinner. If you snack and over eat, then you may experience weight gain. Gaining weight is not our goal with snacking. A goal with snacking smart might be to decrease your risk of developing heart disease or diabetes. Snacking evens out your blood sugar and may lower your cholesterol. Research has stated that if you eat small snacks throughout the day your cholesterol will typically be lower than those that do not snack. If you're working on improving your overall health, snacking can help.



Tips to Snack Smart

1. Pre-game – It's easy to overeat or munch on snacks while in social settings. To help resist temptation, eat a healthy snack or meal before leaving for the gathering. High-fiber foods are smart options because they keep you full longer.
2. Minimize – Practice moderation, not deprivation. Opting for a small plate, will help you stick with smaller portions.
3. Slow down – It takes time for your stomach to signal your brain that you're full. Slow your pace by setting down

your fork between bites, taking frequent drinks of water, and pausing to talk with friends and family.

4. Timing- If you're snacking throughout the day, make sure to eat every three to five hours. A snack between breakfast and lunch, and one between lunch and dinner. Drink a glass of water with each snack to keep yourself feeling full. Keep snacks to 150 to 200 calories per snack. Your actual meals should also be portioned out and smaller if you are snacking. Keep them healthy too.



Healthy Snack Options

To gain the health benefits of snacking, the foods you choose to snack on are just as important as the act itself. It's important to pick things that have a balance of protein, carbohydrates and fat so you stay satisfied and energized. Fruits and vegetables are good choices for healthy snacks. They are full of vitamins and low in calories and fat.

Here are a few more healthy snack ideas:

- Avocado slices or guacamole
- Berries and apples
- Broccoli and hummus
- Carrot sticks and cherry tomatoes
- Celery sticks with peanut butter
- Dark chocolate
- Nuts
- Sunflower seeds
- Tuna and whole-grain crackers
- Whole-grain dry cereal
- Pretzels
- String cheese
- Low-fat or nonfat yogurt
- Whole-wheat English muffin

Final Thoughts

Smart snacking has a lot of benefits if you snack correctly and wisely. It is key to know what makes a healthy snack and what is not healthy. ALWAYS look at the nutrition facts label. The two main things you need to look at on the label are the serving size and the added sugars. It is easy to eat more than the serving size. You should portion your snacks out and never eat out of the bag or container. Also avoid snacks that list sugar as one of the first ingredients.



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Other News:

**If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at hanrahan@astate.edu.

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