

40 Healthy Snack Ideas that Won't Leave You Starving

Posted by Vincci Tsui **Apr 27, 2016** -- Guest Post by Allyson Connors, Dietetic Intern

One of Vincci's [4 Foundations of Healthy Eating](#) is to **eat every 3-5 hours**. Eating regularly can help control your blood sugars and energy levels by providing your body with a more consistent stream of carbohydrates (our bodies' preferred source of energy) and other nutrients throughout the day. You might find that your breakfast, lunch and dinner are timed in a way that you are eating every 4-5 hours and feel satisfied in between. Otherwise, you might find that adding some snacks, or having smaller "mini meals" is what works best for your body in terms of energy and satiety.

Why Snack?

You may have heard that eating more regularly helps to "stoke the fire" and boost your metabolism, but that is a **myth**. While you might see a teeny increase in metabolism, the real benefit to snacking is **hunger control**.

Think about the last time you were *really* hungry, (or *hangry*, as some would say.) We have all had those moments where hunger seems unbearable and we grab at the closet and easiest thing possible, which is often that cookie sitting in the jar or on the kitchen counter, not the vegetables that need to be washed and peeled in the fridge.

Although hunger is a natural cue from the body that it is time to eat, being over-hungry can lead to cravings, impulse decisions on what to eat, and over-eating. Planning snacks ahead means you are making the decision beforehand, not acting on impulse.

Snacks can also be a great opportunity to add foods and nutrients that might be "missing" from your diet, like fruits, vegetables and calcium-rich foods. Don't miss out the opportunity to add extra nutrition into the day by trying to decide when you're *starving* and just want something fast!

What Makes a Good Snack?

If the key to snacking is hunger control, then ask yourself – do your snacks truly satisfy, or do they leave you wanting more? It's so easy to grab something quick, like that sugary muffin from the café, or a bag of chips or pretzels from the nearest vending machine, but they often leave us feeling hungry within minutes.

Combining a source of carbohydrates and a source of protein will make a snack that can keep you from getting hungry. Carbohydrate-rich foods, like vegetables, fruit, and whole grains, can provide fibre, which in combination with the protein can help you feel satisfied and delay hunger until your next meal.

A good example of this would be a snack like fruit and yogurt; the fruit would provide the source of carbohydrates and fibre, while the yogurt is providing the protein.

Foods like legumes, nuts and seeds give you the best bang for your buck, as they contain both fibre and protein. In vegetables and hummus, for example, the chickpeas in the hummus provide both fibre and protein, and you get an extra fibre (and antioxidant!) boost from the vegetables.

Is it Better to Have 5 or 6 Smaller Meals?

This is really a matter of personal preference. Everyone has different schedules and appetites. Sometimes gaps between meals can be lengthy and a small snack just won't fend off hunger, sometimes you feel more energized eating small amounts at a time as opposed to a big meal. Whatever the case may be, there's no right or wrong answer to this question. You may find that thinking of all your eating occasions as "mini meals" instead of meals versus snacks may change the way you decide what to eat, and might help you pack some extra nutrition into your day.

Final Tip...

Don't forget to plan ahead! Planning your snacks ahead of time allows you to make smart choices of what you will eat, and prevents you from getting overly hungry and eating anything in plain sight. And now, the moment you've been waiting for...

40 Healthy & Filling Snack Ideas

Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth...

1. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain greek yogurt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen berries, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oats sprinkled on top. Add 2 Tbsp seeds to make this more filling (chia, hemp, sunflower, pumpkin)
2. $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cottage cheese with a handful of grapes or a banana
3. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain greek yogurt with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bran buds and 2 Tbsp raisins
4. Strawberries with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ricotta for dipping
5. An apple with a handful of nuts
6. Fruit plate with a yogurt dip (plain greek yogurt, cinnamon, pinch brown sugar)
7. Fruit salad topped with 2 Tbsp pumpkin seeds
8. $\frac{1}{2}$ banana length wise, with 1 tbsp peanut butter spread over the banana. Freeze for a frozen treat!
9. $\frac{1}{3}$ cup trail mix (mixed nuts and seeds, dried fruit, cereal)
10. 4-6 dates stuffed with almond butter or ricotta cheese
11. 1 cup cereal with milk or kefir and a banana sliced on top
12. 1 cup kefir with a sliced pear
13. 1 cup steamed milk or a latte with a bunch of grapes
14. 1 slice whole grain toast with peanut butter and banana, to add more protein add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cottage cheese on top
15. Boosted oatmeal: Make $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oats with milk and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup skim milk powder, topped with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen berries and 2 Tbsp hemp hearts
16. [Kale Ginger Berry Smoothie](#) (or visit the [Dairy Farmers of Canada](#) website for more smoothie recipes)
17. Homemade granola bars (Like my [Apricot & Almond Granola Bars](#))

Try Something Savoury...

18. ¼ cup hummus with raw veggies (carrots, celery, zucchini, snap peas, cucumber, mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, radishes, etc.)
19. Whole grain crackers with cheese
20. ½ cup cottage cheese with cherry tomatoes and freshly cracked black pepper
21. Large bell pepper slices with hummus or cottage cheese spread on them
22. Raw veggies and chili dip (mix 1/4 cup chili and 2 tbsp greek yogurt)
23. 1 cup edamame beans cooked in the shell with a pinch of salt (you can buy frozen edamame beans)
24. Veggie sticks with homemade tzatziki (greek yogurt, dill, garlic, lemon juice, shredded cucumber)
25. Tuna salad or flavoured tuna on celery sticks or cucumber slices
26. 1-2 boiled eggs with raw veggies
27. [Roasted Chickpeas](#)
28. ½ cup cherry tomatoes with 4 small mozzarella balls, pinch salt and 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar drizzled over top
29. ½ whole grain pita with 1/4 cup chickpeas or hummus, mixed greens or diced veggies with lemon, olive oil and pinch of salt
30. 2 rye crackers topped with 1/4 avocado and pinch salt and lemon or lime juice
31. 1 slice whole grain toast with tuna salad (tuna, greek yogurt, celery, pickles) or egg salad
32. Mini salad with boiled egg or 1/2 cup chickpeas
33. Leftovers!

A Little Bit of Both...

34. 2 celery stalks (cut in half or thirds) with 1 Tbsp peanut butter spread on the celery sticks (add a few raisins to make ants on a log)
35. 2-4 slices cheese and some grapes
36. Apple with peanut butter
37. 1-2 boiled eggs with a pear
38. 4 dried figs with 2 slices of cheese
39. Whole grain crackers, apple and cheese slices
40. Mini charcuterie board: small amount of meat, or boiled egg, 2 slices cheese, 2 dried figs, 1/2 apple, cucumber slices and 1/2 whole wheat pita or slice whole grain bread