

# SMART SNACKING

## Fact sheet

Snacks are a great way to help keep your energy levels steady and your mind alert until your next full meal. However, it's important to pay attention to what types of snacks you eat. Smart snacking is all about choosing healthy, nutritious snacks.

### IS IT OK TO HAVE SNACKS?

Snacks between meals used to be frowned upon. We now know they play an important role for each of the following groups of people:

#### > Children

Young children have difficulty meeting all of their nutrient needs from three main meals alone each day. Children have small tummies, therefore smaller appetites and are unable to fit in all the food they need to last until the next meal. Snacking on healthy, nutritious foods helps to top up their energy levels as well as provide vitamins, minerals and nutrients that their bodies need for good health. Too many snacks can spoil their appetite, so it's important to make sure you leave enough time after a snack for them to get hungry in time for the next meal.

#### > Athletes and very active people

The more activity we do, the more energy we burn. Athletes and very active people often need extra energy and nutrients to meet the demands of their busy and active lifestyles. Snacks rich in high-fibre carbohydrates, like wholegrain bread, crackers and cereal bars, are great as a "top-up" between meals.

#### > Slimmers

Regular meals and healthy snacks will help curb your hunger. You will be less likely to overeat or be tempted by the less-healthy snacks, making it easier to control your weight. Protein-rich snacks, like low-fat yogurt and reduced-fat cheese and crackers will help to keep you feeling fuller for longer.

#### > Adults

It's natural to feel a lull in energy levels if you don't eat between meals. Smart carbohydrate-based, low GI snacks can help your blood sugar levels from hitting a low and will keep you feeling energised. One of the most important things to remember about snacks is that they contribute extra kilojoules. If you are starting to include snacks, and you are aiming to maintain your weight, cut down your meal size. You shouldn't be eating any extra kilojoules, just spreading it out more evenly across the day.

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### WHAT IS A SMART SNACK?

#### > How many kilojoules should a snack contain?

According to the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, a snack for an average adult is around 600 kilojoules<sup>1</sup>. However, this may be less for people who are watching their weight or much more for active children and athletes, because everyone has different energy needs. The average person shouldn't need more than 2 snacks each day.

#### > Size does matter

One trick to smart snacking involves portion size. Remember a snack is just that - a snack! It's not supposed to be the same size as a main meal. Think of the size of a piece of toast or a tub of yogurt, that's about the size a snack should be. If you are active, your snacks may need to be a bit bigger.

### GOT THE MUNCHIES FOR SWEET FOODS?

Often we snack when we are bored. These snacks can contribute excess kilojoules leading to weight gain. Before you reach for a snack, think about whether you are really hungry, and if you are, grab something nutritious, rather than a sweet treat.

If you are hungry, it means that your blood sugar levels are falling, and your brain is telling your body to find food to increase the blood sugar. Although you might be craving sugar, what your body really needs is some carbohydrate, and the best carbohydrate is slowly digested or [low GI](#), as this will maintain blood sugar levels for longer.

If a healthy snack such as a piece of fruit or wholegrain crackers doesn't satisfy you, and you really feel like a sweet treat, then have one. It is not "bad" to treat yourself. You simply need to balance healthy snacks with treats.

Occasional treats can be part of a healthy diet, it's just a matter of how often and how much. Try sticking to a healthy diet during the week so you can have a treat at the weekend or by indulging once in a while in treats with the "[Be Treatwise](#)" logo, in small amounts.

This is a good rule for weekends and special occasions when you know you've had healthy snacks days during the week.

### GOOD FOOD, GOOD LIFE TIPS FOR SMART SNACKS

- > Fruit is one of the most convenient snacks, and full of nutrients
- > Low fat yoghurts or fromage frais taste great and provide calcium
- > A piece of wholegrain toast, a bowl of high fibre cereal or low fat crackers are a great snack option, with the benefit of fibre

<i>Children</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Zip-lock bags make great bite-sized goodie bags for grapes, cereal bits or unsalted nuts with sultanas.</li> <li>&gt; Spoon low-fat yogurt into deep ice trays, pop in a popsicle stick and enjoy creamy frozen mini lollipops on a hot day.</li> </ul>
<i>Teenagers &amp; active children</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; A smoothie with blended strawberries, low-fat milk and yogurt, is a refreshing and filling snack.</li> <li>&gt; Fruit loaf, scones or crumpets spread with low-fat ricotta, jam or peanut butter are great substantial snacks for active kids.</li> </ul>
<i>Stimmers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; If you're craving chocolate, try instant, low-kilojoule, hot chocolate, or a low kilojoule chocolate mousse. It's sweet and satisfying!</li> <li>&gt; Look for individually wrapped snacks like low-fat cereal bars, dried fruit packs (e.g. box of sultanas) and air-popped popcorn.</li> </ul>
<i>Adults</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; For a savoury snack, dip wholegrain crackers into hommus, lowfat dips or salsa.</li> <li>&gt; Look for sorbets, ice blocks or low-fat ice cream in small portions that fit the less than 600kJ snack guidelines.</li> </ul>



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Nestlé has always maintained a commitment to advances in nutrition and is continuing this through its partnership with the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS)

### References

1. Smith, A., E. Kellett, and Y. Schmerlaib, *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. 1998: Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services.

**This fact sheet contains general information. Please consult your healthcare professional for specific advice for your personal situation.**

