



Secrets of Smart Summer Snacking

As you head outdoors to take advantage of the warmer weather, there are a number of easy ways to jump-start a healthy, active lifestyle and kick the couch potato routine.

While it's great that you're getting more exercise, don't forget to incorporate smart eating habits along with increased activity. Fueling your body with healthy snack choices helps keep energy levels high. But many snacks we consider as sources of energy and nutrition are actually loaded with sugar and preservatives. Another common pitfall is to avoid snacking altogether, and rely on two to three big meals to provide all the nutrients and sustainable energy you need for the day.

"Smart snacking is a very important part of our daily diet," says registered dietitian and health educator Allegra Burton, MPH, RD. "By eating small portions balanced with protein and complex carbohydrates throughout the day, we continually fuel our bodies with the nutrients we need to stay healthy and energized."



Burton says picking the right snacks can be challenging, especially when you're hungry or on the go. She shares five easy tips to carry through your next trip or outdoor adventure.

- **Plan ahead.** Before you head to the lake for the weekend or a family road trip, plan on a variety of snacking options to satisfy everyone. Burton recommends fresh fruit, a mixture of nuts and dried fruit, low-fat string cheese, and plenty of bottled water.
- **Snack small and snack often.** Whether you're going to the gym, on a walk, or to the amusement park or beach, throw some treats in the car or your backpack. All-natural products are great because they provide even sustained energy. Keep a variety of flavors on-hand since more options will keep you more likely to come back for more of what's good for you.
- **Mix it up.** There are many smart snacking options to choose from every day. One day you could have fruit and nuts, the next day yogurt or veggies with a low fat bean dip. Variety will keep your taste buds from getting bored and will encourage you to keep reaching for healthier snacks.
- **Give in, not up.** It's hard to resist a cold, sweet treat on a warm day at the beach or family barbecue. Rather than avoiding moderate indulgences, flex your snack smarts. Choose low-fat frozen yogurt and lean toward dark chocolate over milk or white chocolate since it has antioxidants that are good for your heart. And remember, it's all about portion control - a little goes a long way!
- **Match snack with activity.** Make sure to pack snacks appropriate for your activity. For example, perishable or bulky foods don't make sense if you're embarking on a hike. Instead pack all-natural snacks placed in baggies such as trail mix, and cut-up veggies that are easy to carry and stash in your backpack. Conversely, if you are going to be at the park or on a boat, items that can be stored in a cooler allow for more diverse snacking options.

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