

Snacking

There are as many myths about snacking as there are about snack foods, so it's no wonder a mid-morning nibble is shrouded in confusion and guilt for so many of us.

A survey by Kellogg's looking at the UK's snacking habits showed that a massive 97% of us were secret snackers and that we thought eating between meals was something to be ashamed of. A lot of people were confused about whether snacking was healthy and just under half of us thought that snacking made us put on weight.

Now of course if snacking means only gorging on chocolate, crisps, biscuits and cakes then these myths are true. Snacking per se isn't the problem, it is the types of snack eaten that's important. So here's our guide to guilt free savvy snacking.

Smart snacking means you can hold your head up high because you are:

- boosting your intake of important vitamins and minerals
- keeping your energy levels up
- helping to control your meal time portion sizes
- reducing the chance of a vending machine blow out
- and you might even drop a few pounds along the way.

100-150 calories is a good guide to work on for snacks. Also, snacks high in carbohydrate, low in fat and containing some protein are the best choice to help fill you up and to give you an extra nutrition boost.

The key to smart snacking is to plan your snacks just like you would the rest of your food. Give yourself permission to snack, buy your snacks with the rest of your supermarket shop and keep them with you when you're on the run. Follow our guide to the best snacks to choose when hunger comes calling:

Mid-morning :

When you can't go a step further without raiding your lunch box try these snacks to keep you going:

- Kelloggs Nutrigrain Elevenses – fortified with vitamins and minerals.
- Toasted wholemeal English muffin with reduced fat spread – a great source of fibre.
- Small handful of dried apricots – contains iron and calcium.
- Granola bar – packed with oats, dried fruit and seeds for a filling nutritious snack.
- Small bowl of wholegrain cereal and milk – low in fat, a good source of calcium.
- One banana – one of your 5 a day.
- Ryvita mini bites – a really tasty low calorie snack.
- One slice of Soreen malt loaf – it seems naughty but it is low in fat and packed with nutritional goodies.

Post-lunch energy dive:

You know that sleepy feeling in the afternoon where, no matter what we do, your eyelids just keep heading south? Try these snacks for an afternoon pick-me-up:

- Skinny cappuccino or latte – great source of calcium and caffeine, to give you a boost.
- FruitaBu Superberry – a great sweet hit without added sugar.
- Handful of mixed nuts and raisins – a low GI snack with beneficial essential fatty acids.
- One slice of wholegrain or granary toast topped with crunchy peanut butter – a source of essential fatty acids and fibre to keep you going

- Packet of snack-a-jacks – decide between sweet or savoury depending on your mood. A filling yet low calorie choice
- A couple of rye crispbread with 2 tablespoons of cottage cheese – a low fat feast containing fibre and calcium
- Kelloggs Nutrigrain softbake bar – fortified and filling.
- Honey and granola Pret pot – a delicious combination of plain yogurt, sweet honey and crunchy granola to see you through till dinner.

Pre-dinner nibbles:

Try to hold off having anything if your dinner will be ready in less than half an hour – take your mind off food by doing chores away from the kitchen. If you really can't hold out until dinner, only have a very tiny snack:

- Vegetable sticks – very low calorie, good source of vitamins and fibre.
- Glass of fruit smoothie – low fat and packed with vitamins and minerals.
- Plain rice cake or bread stick – very low fat.
- Piece of fruit – low calorie and a good source of vitamins.
- A mixed salad with low fat dressing – filling but low in calories.
- FruitaBu apple crisps – all the crunch without the fat and one of your 5 a day.
- M&S Prawn Siu Mai – at only 20 calories each a couple of these delicious Chinese style dumplings will definitely not spoil your appetite.

Bedtime:

Eating late at night won't make you put on weight unless you're eating more calories than you need over the whole day. Snacks just before bedtime need to be easy to digest and not too bulky so your stomach won't be gurgling all night.

- Glass of skimmed milk – source of tryptophan to help promote sleep.
- Low calorie malted or chocolate drink – a sweet hit without the sugar and calories.
- 2 crackers with low fat cream cheese.
- Kelloggs Special K mini breaks – a light snack, low in calories and fat.
- A small banana sliced into plain yogurt – contains tryptophan and vitamin B6 to aid sleep.
- 1 mini babybel – only 60 calories and almost a fifth of an adult's daily calcium requirement.