

Diabetes: Healthy Snacks

Is it OK to include snacks in my diabetic meal plan?

The need to eat between meals or before bed depends on your blood sugar control and how many calories you need to eat per day. Adults who eat fewer calories and carbohydrates (carbs) may not need to snack if their blood sugar stays in control between meals.

Snacks can help to prevent low blood sugar. You may want to include snacks in your meal plan because:

- Snacks can help you balance the food you eat with the medicines you take.
- Eating smaller meals and having snacks with protein may help you avoid hunger and overeating.
- You need to spread the carbohydrates that you eat more evenly throughout the day to help decrease spikes in your blood sugar after meals.
- You exercise and want to prevent a drop in your blood sugar.

Which foods are good snacks?

Different types of snacks have different effects. The best choices for snacks are foods:

- Low in saturated fat, such as lean meats, or low or fat-free milk products
- High in fiber, such as fruits, vegetables, or whole grain foods

Snacks that are high in protein and fiber may satisfy hunger longer. Sugar from fruit will last 1 or 2 hours, so fruit is good for a morning or afternoon snack. Carbs eaten with proteins, such as low-fat cheese or lean meat, change to sugar more slowly. If you have low blood sugar during the night, you can add a lean protein to your evening carbohydrate snack. This can help the sugar last through the night. Milk and yogurt are a natural mix of carbohydrate and protein and make a good bedtime snack choice.

Snacks that contain 15 to 30 grams of carbohydrate fit into most diabetic meal plans. If you are on a high-calorie meal plan, you may need to eat as much as 60 grams of carbohydrates (4 carb choices) per snack. You should also work with a dietitian to help plan your food choices.

If you are still hungry after a snack, try sugar-free Popsicles or Jell-O. Or make up a vegetable tray using cold crunchy vegetables and a fat-free dressing for a dip.

For more information, contact

- The American Diabetes Association
800-342-2383
<http://www.diabetes.org>

Developed by RelayHealth.

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Snacks = 1 carb choice (about 15 grams of carbohydrate)

- 1 medium apple or any round fresh fruit
- 18 small pretzel twists
- 10 multigrain honey graham mini rice cakes
- 18 white cheddar soy crisps
- 2 whole-grain white cheddar or butter popcorn rice cakes (natural flavor, light salt)
- 1/2 small (2 oz) whole-wheat bagel with fat-free cream cheese
- 3 cups air-popped or low-fat microwave popcorn
- 1/2 cup light tuna or egg salad in 1/2 of a whole-wheat pita
- Whole light multigrain English muffin topped with tomato sauce and 1 oz low-fat mozzarella cheese and then baked
- Baby carrots, broccoli, or cauliflower tops with low-fat or nonfat dressings for dipping (2 cups raw vegetables and 1/2 cup nonfat creamy dressing)
- Celery with nonfat cream cheese and 2 tablespoons of raisins or dried cranberries
- 8 oz 1% or skim milk
- Low-fat or nonfat flavored milk prepared with sugar-free flavoring mix
- 6 to 8 oz light yogurt (sweetened with NutraSweet or Splenda)
- About 6 homemade breaded and baked chicken breast nuggets
- 4 to 5 vanilla wafers
- 1 and 1/2 graham crackers
- 1/2 cup low-fat ice cream
- 2 tablespoons of raisins
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 fruit roll-up
- 1 fruit juice bar



Snacks = 2 carb choices (about 30 grams of carbohydrate)

- 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese with 3/4 cup pineapple chunks in own juice
- 1 large banana or 2 medium servings of fresh fruit
- 1 cup of multigrain Cheerios with 1/2 cup skim milk
- 1 small (2 oz) whole-wheat bagel with fat-free cream cheese
- 1 mozzarella cheese stick (part-skim) with 1 cup of fruit chunks and 6 to 8 low-fat, whole-wheat crackers
- Small baked potato, topped with 1/2 cup bean chili
- 1/2 sandwich with turkey, low-fat Swiss cheese, and mustard and a medium fruit or 1 cup of 1% or skim milk
- 1 low-fat granola bar
- 4-oz individual fruit cup and 1 cup of 1% or skim milk
- 1 cup of sugar-free pudding
- 1/4 cup dried fruit
- 2 caramel corn rice cakes
- 1 cereal bar
- 1 oz of baked tortilla chips with 1/4 cup salsa
- 15 baked potato chips (1 oz bag equals 1 and 1/2 carbohydrate choices)
- 14 animal crackers and 1/2 cup 1% or skim milk
- 2 fig cookies and 1/2 cup 1% or skim milk
- 8 oz low-fat or nonfat chocolate milk (regular sugar sweetened)

Protein Snacks

- 1/4 cup natural nuts (peanuts, walnuts, or almonds) equals 1 protein and 2 healthy fat servings (about 200 calories).
- Celery with 2 tablespoons of peanut butter equals 1 protein and 3 healthy fat servings (about 180 calories). Look for natural peanut butter with no trans fats.
- 2 fat-free mozzarella cheese sticks equal 2 protein servings (about 90 calories).

