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Nutrition Nibbles

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Snack Audit

Snacks, or in-between meal nibbles, can be a smart way to stave-off hunger, perk up your energy, and minimize cravings and binges. Snacks can also be a form of dietary sabotage. It all depends upon your approach. I recently conducted a desk drawer audit of two different colleagues and I found two very different forms of snacks stashed away. One colleague had two pieces of fresh fruit, a hard-boiled egg, and a couple of containers of plain roasted nuts. The second person had several bags of potato chips, a few chocolate bars, and some other processed food items. One colleague received an “A” on their snack audit, the other a “F.” Note, I love the idea of keeping foods easily accessible in a desk drawer, purse, backpack or briefcase for when hunger strikes but I also have some tips on how to make the most of these nibbling opportunities.

Change your viewpoint. Snacks should add to your day’s nutrition, not merely be a filler. Every day your body needs a certain amount of calories, carbohydrate, protein, fat, fiber, fluid, vitamins, and minerals. Each time you eat, whether it’s a meal or a snack, you have the chance to nourish yourself and meet your body’s requirements. If you view your snack merely as a way to drown the hunger pains and fill up on foods like white crackers, greasy chips, or sugar-filled candy, you may be depriving yourself of valuable nutrition while over-nourishing yourself at the same time.

Snacks should be satisfying. For a well-balanced snack, include two food groups. Ideally your snacks would contain some produce and some protein for ultimate satiety. Some great snack examples would be an apple with some all-natural peanut butter or celery with hummus or nuts with dried fruit. Think about how much more satisfaction you gain from eating whole grain crackers with low-fat cheese versus plain white crackers.

Snacks should not be too tempting. I urge you not to stock your snack drawer with foods you find irresistible. If you cannot control yourself when it comes to nuts, don’t keep them around or at the very least, pre-portion them out. If you find yourself dipping into the drawer when you are not hungry, it may be time to rethink your available snack choices.

Stay hydrated. Just as we include fluids with our meals, so we should make a point to drink a glass of water with our snacks. Staying hydrated helps us stay on top of our hunger, practice perfect snack portion control, and aids the digestion process.

For some winning snack combos, try fruit + dairy, vegetables + bean dip, fruit + nuts/seeds, whole grains + dairy/nut butter, or produce + egg.

Questions or Comments? Email me at
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