Healthy Eating: Smart Snacking

Jennifer Hillan and Linda B. Bobroff

Snacking can be good for you! Healthy snacks provide vitamins and minerals that may be lacking from your main meals. Keep these smart snacking tips in mind the next time you have a “snack attack.”

Follow MyPlate
Choose a variety of nutrient-rich snacks from all five MyPlate food groups. Here are a few examples:

• Fruits: apple slices, banana, blueberries
• Vegetables: grape tomatoes, carrots, celery sticks
• Protein Foods: hard-cooked egg, black bean salsa, nuts, leftover chicken, hummus
• Dairy: low-fat yogurt, low-fat milk, low-fat string cheese

Grains: whole-wheat crackers, oatmeal, leftover rice or pasta

Figure 1. Plan a snack that uses food from two or three MyPlate groups to provide lasting energy.
Credits: www.ChooseMyPlate.gov


2. Jennifer Hillan, MSH, RD, LD/N, former ENAFS nutrition educator/trainer; and Linda B. Bobroff, RDN, professor; Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.
**Healthy Eating: Smart Snacking**

**Keep it Convenient**
Have healthy snacks available and ready to eat. Keep fruit washed and vegetables cleaned and sliced in the refrigerator for easy snacking!

**Plan for Snacking**
Eat snacks two to three hours before mealtme so that you do not ruin your appetite for the next main meal. Snacks are meant to settle your hunger until your next meal, not make you feel full.

**When to snack?**
Snack only when you are hungry. Avoid snacking when you are just bored or stressed. In those cases, find something else to do like read a magazine or walk around the block.

**Go Easy on High-Fat or Sugary Snacks**
Snacks like chips and candy are okay once in a while, but choose most of your snacks from the five MyPlate food groups.

---

Figure 2. Bite-sized fruits such as blueberries are a convenient and nutritious snack. 
Credits: Creativeye99/gettyimages.com