

Healthy Snacking at Home

The coronavirus pandemic has meant that many of us are now spending more time at home, and this can make it hard to resist the temptation to snack on less healthy foods, especially if we are feeling bored, or looking for something to cheer us up. In a recent survey, we found that 63% of adults who said they were eating less healthily during the Coronavirus lockdown were eating more because of boredom, and 45% said they were eating less healthily because of stress, tiredness or anxiety ([you can find out more about the survey here](#)).

The good news is that there are many healthier snack choices that taste good and provide us with essential nutrients. In this article we offer some tips and suggestions for healthier snacks for all ages.

Snacks for adults

Snacking usually describes the food and drinks that we have aside from the main meals of the day and can form part of a healthy and balanced diet. If we choose healthier snacks then these can provide us with essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals and fibre, without adding too many calories, sugar, saturated fat or salt. This section gives tips on making better snack choices.



Check the label

- When you go shopping, check food labels to help you choose options with less fat, saturated fat or sugar.
- You can use the traffic lights on the front of packaging to easily compare products at a glance and make a healthier choice.
- Look for 'lighter', reduced fat/salt and sugar free options.

Be portion wise!

- If you occasionally enjoy snacks high in fat, salt or sugar, try to portion them out to avoid eating a large number of calories in one go. For example, put a handful of crisps or nuts in a bowl, or buy smaller multipack bags when you go shopping.
- You can eat larger portions of fruit and vegetables as a snack because they are less 'energy dense' - that is you can eat more for relatively few calories.
- For more information on healthy portion sizes, see our [Get portion wise page](#).

Out of sight, out of mind

- Avoid having snacks high in fat, sugar and salt easily at hand around the home, as this might mean you are more tempted by them.

- Try replacing these with healthier alternatives (see below), for example by putting a bowl of fruit on the kitchen table or next to your computer and keeping less healthy choices in the cupboard out of sight.



Plan ahead

- Make a list of healthier snacks to buy before you go shopping and it's a good idea to avoid shopping when you are feeling hungry, as some research suggests this may mean we are more likely to make less healthy choices.
- If you tend to have a mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon snack to fill a gap between meals, plan out healthier options you can have, such as a round of wholegrain toast and peanut butter.

Government guidance suggests getting about **80% of our calories from our meals across the day and this leaves 20% (about a fifth of our daily calories) for snacks and drinks**. If you divided this between 2 snacks, for an adult who is moderately active, this is equivalent to **around 200 kcal per snack for women and 250 kcal per snack for men**. Depending on how you eat, and whether you are trying to control your weight, it may be better to go for smaller snacks, or even to avoid snacking at all if this works better for you.

Snacks around 100 kcal or less

1. A rye crispbread with reduced fat cream cheese
2. A sliced apple, pear or orange (one of your 5 A DAY)
3. A medium sized banana
4. A small piece of reduced fat cheddar cheese (about 25 g) and cherry tomatoes
5. A boiled egg

100-150 kcal snacks

1. A small low fat plain yogurt, orange segments and a sprinkling of sunflower seeds
2. Carrot sticks and two tablespoons of low fat houmous
3. 20g (about 3 handfuls) of plain popcorn
4. A crumpet with low fat spread
5. 2 ready-made falafels
6. 2 slices of malt loaf



150-200 kcal snacks

1. Slice of wholemeal toast and peanut butter or mackerel pate
2. A handful of unsalted mixed nuts
3. Pitta bread with canned tuna and cucumber
4. Bowl of breakfast wholegrain cereal with semi-skimmed milk
5. Toasted wholemeal muffin with sliced banana or cottage cheese

Healthy swaps

Spending more time at home might mean you are tempted to reach for a less healthy snack, especially if you are experiencing feelings of anxiety or boredom. Here are a few suggestions for healthier swaps you can make...

If you fancy...	then why not try...
chocolate or sweets...	a satsuma, apple or handful of strawberries
ice cream...	unsweetened, low-fat yogurt with a sprinkling of frozen berries
biscuits...	a small handful of nuts or seeds, or a rice cake topped with nut butter (choose one with no added sugar or salt)
cake...	a crumpet and low-fat spread, or a slice of fruit loaf

Click here for more information, in our [article on healthy snacking](#).