

Why do we snack?

Snacking is consuming something between your regular main meals. Some people "snack all day", not having planned times to sit and focus on a meal. Others choose to snack even if they are not hungry.

Hunger is the main motivation behind snacking, but factors like location, social environment, time of day, and food availability contribute as well.

Is snacking good or bad for you?

The choices of snack foods can be varied between healthy choices and items often referred to as "junk food" which may include high fat, high sugar and/or high sodium nutritional value.

Even if a snack is considered to be a healthy food combination, like cashews, for example, eating 1 cup of cashews, and better yet, salted cashews can provide you with over 750 calories, 62 grams of fat and 400 mg of sodium in one sitting. So, healthy items over-portioned can result in extra calories that may not fit into an overall healthy diet plan.

Does snacking boost metabolism and help with weight loss?

Studies on snacking's effects on appetite and weight have provided mixed results.

If calories consumed as a snack is not compensated at the next meal, overall caloric intake for the day will not promote weight loss. The type of food consumed may have a metabolic effect. Research has shown that foods such as legumes, pulses, spices, cacao, apple cider vinegar, coconut oil, tea, coffee, chili peppers, nuts, seeds and protein-rich foods along with water, YES, water affect your metabolism.

Snacking can be beneficial, if paired appropriately with your meal selections for the day.

How do we become more mindful when choosing to snack?

- 1. Slow down and tune into your awareness:** Are you physically hungry? Are you stressed or bored? Is your urge due to the items left on the counter? If you are physically hungry, then give yourself permission and have a sensible snack.
- 2. Choose your snack mindfully:** What is going to be satisfying? Is what I choose going to keep me satisfied until the next meal? The more thought you give to your choice, the more likely you will choose something that will be healthy and satisfying.
- 3. Consider how much you will eat:** Use the rule of 50-100 calories per hour to sustain you until the next time you eat. Using the food label, portion the food chosen to stick within an acceptable range and you will be satisfied physically and emotionally your choice!
- 4. Focus and savor your food choice:** eating slowly and paying attention to the enjoyment of your food choice will create more mindfulness. You will be surprised at how satisfied you are from a smaller amount of food and because you are giving yourself permission to enjoy this smaller amount of food.
- 5. Remain open and self-accepting:** explore different snack options and create a new awareness to your hunger cues and snacking behaviors.