

- [Home](#)
- [Healthy Lifestyle](#)
- [Weight Loss Nutrition](#)
- [Medical Bariatrics](#)
- [Surgical Bariatrics](#)

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**Author:**[BariatricScience.com](http://BariatricScience.com)**Reviewer:**[Robert Ziltzer, MD](#)**MOST READ FEATURES**[Fruit Juice – Friend or Foe?](#)[Your Snacks - Chance or Choice!](#)[Battle Cravings with Urge Surfing](#)[Weight Loss Diaries May Double Weight Loss](#)[Prescription Exercise](#)[Pushing Past Excuses](#)[Color Me Healthy](#)[Taking control of setbacks](#)[Success Strategies from Winning Losers](#)[Produce Power](#)[Learning from Setbacks](#)[It Takes a Village to Lose Weight](#)[Learn to Love Your Pedometer](#)[Resistant Starch: The Latest Diet Fad or a Healthful Trend?](#)[Should I be Concerned About Metabolic Syndrome?](#)[Helping Your Overweight Teen](#)**Nutrition****Your Snacks - Chance or Choice!***by Constance Brown-Riggs, RD, CDE*

As a registered dietitian I counsel countless individuals on the benefits of healthy eating. One of the many questions I ask as part of my intake is, "do you snack between meals?" The answers never cease to amaze me. "Oh! No! I never snack!" or "I thought snacking was bad for you." Some simply reply, "I don't know what to snack on." Most people are confused when it comes to snacking. The good news is with planning snacks can be part of a healthy diet. So, let's examine the responses and clear up some of the confusion.

**"Oh! No! I never snack!"** - The choice is yours to snack or not. But before you dismiss snacking all together think about the benefits.

- Weight management- research suggest that individuals who snack throughout the day may actually have better weight control than those eating only three meals a day.
  - Losing weight - snacking between meals can help to control hunger.
- Sustained energy throughout the day - snacking helps the body refuel after bouts of exercise and physical activity.
- Controlling blood sugar - People with type 1 or type 2 diabetes can actually have better overall control of blood sugars and decrease the risk of hypoglycemia when eating three snacks daily.
  - Improving overall quality of the diet - snacks can supply nutrients like calcium, fiber or phytonutrients that might be low in the diet.

**"I thought snacking was bad for you"** - Snacking can certainly be a challenge if you are eating mindlessly and end up getting more calories than your body needs - causing weight gain. If you eat when you are not hungry or out of emotion you are eating mindlessly. Typically, when eating mindlessly your food choices are high calorie, low nutrient foods, often referred to as empty calorie foods.

**"I don't know what to snack on"** - Just about any food can be a snack. Healthy snacks are low calorie, high nutrient foods - known as nutrient dense foods. They give you more bang (nutrients) for your buck (calories). Foods with 20% or more of the Daily Value for a vitamin or mineral are an excellent source and are nutrient dense.

**Healthy Snacks Have**

- Less than 200 calories
- Less than 6g total fat
- Less than 1g saturated fat and 0g transfat
  - At least 2.5g fiber
  - Less than 5g sugar
- Less than 260mg sodium

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