7 ways to snack smarter

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Choosing the right snacks can be a game-changer for maintaining energy and overall health, but looks can be deceiving when it comes to nutrition. Many snacks marketed as "healthy," like bran muffins and cereal bars, are actually loaded with hidden sugars and unhealthy fats. Even "fat-free" options can sneak in excess salt and sugar to make up for the flavor loss, which may ultimately do more harm than good. Knowing what to look for can help you enjoy satisfying, nourishing snacks that support your goals rather than derail them.

Here are 7 tips for smarter snacking.

1. Go for the grain. Whole-grain snacks can give you energy with staying power. Try some whole-grain low-salt pretzels or tortilla chips, or a serving of high-fiber cereals.
2. Bring back breakfast. Many breakfast foods can be repurposed as a nutritious snack later in the day. How about a slice of whole-grain toast topped with low-sugar jam? Low-sugar granola also makes a quick snack.
3. Try a "high-low" combination. Combine a small amount of a food with healthy fat, like peanut butter, with a larger amount of a very light food, like apple slices or celery sticks.
4. Go nuts. Unsalted nuts and seeds make great snacks. Almonds, walnuts, peanuts, roasted pumpkin seeds, cashews, hazelnuts, filberts, and other nuts and seeds contain many beneficial nutrients and are more likely to leave you feeling full (unlike chips or pretzels). Nuts have lots of calories, though, so keep portion sizes small.
5. The combo snack. Try to have more than just one macronutrient (protein, fat, carbohydrate) at each snacking session. For example, have a few nuts (protein and fat) and some grapes (carbohydrates). Or try some whole-grain crackers (carbohydrate) with some low-fat cheese (protein and fat). These balanced snacks tend to keep you feeling satisfied.
6. Snack mindfully. Don't eat your snack while doing something else — like surfing the Internet, watching TV, or working at your desk. Instead, stop what you're doing for a few minutes and eat your snack like you would a small meal.
7. Take it with you. Think ahead and carry a small bag of healthful snacks in your pocket or purse so you won't turn in desperation to the cookies at the coffee counter or the candy bars in the office vending machine.

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Choose the correct option.

1. Why are some snacks marketed as "healthy" not as nutritious as they seem?

a) They contain hidden sugars and unhealthy fats.
b) They are too expensive.
c) They are hard to find in stores.
d) They do not provide enough energy.

2. What is a good example of a whole-grain snack?
a) Regular salted pretzels
b) High-fiber cereals
c) Cookies
d) Ice cream cones

3. Which breakfast food can be repurposed as a snack?
a) Pancakes with syrup
b) Whole-grain toast with low-sugar jam
c) Fried eggs with bacon
d) Croissants

4. What is an example of a "high-low" combination?
a) Whole-grain bread and butter
b) Cheese and crackers
c) Nuts and candy
d) Peanut butter and celery sticks

5. Why should you keep portion sizes small when snacking on nuts?
a) They are not very nutritious.
b) They do not keep you full.
c) They are high in calories.
d) They are too expensive.

6. What is the benefit of combining macronutrients in your snacks?
a) It keeps you feeling satisfied longer.
b) It makes the snack taste better.
c) It reduces the calorie content.
d) It allows you to snack more frequently.

7. What does the text recommend avoiding while snacking?
a) Eating without drinking water
b) Eating salty foods
c) Eating late at night
d) Eating while multitasking

8. How can you avoid unhealthy snacks when you are on the go?
a) Skip snacks altogether.
b) Buy snacks from vending machines.
c) Carry healthy snacks with you.
d) Only snack at home.

9. What is a disadvantage of snacks labeled "fat-free"?
a) They often lack essential nutrients.
b) They may have added salt and sugar for flavor.
c) They are harder to find in stores.
d) They are more expensive than regular snacks.

10. What is the main goal of the text?
a) To promote specific snack brands
b) To discourage snacking altogether
c) To provide tips for smarter snacking
d) To explain the benefits of skipping meals

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