



POP IT: Popcorn is a healthy snack

# Not junk!

Here are some surprising contenders that have been given a thumbs up by nutritionists

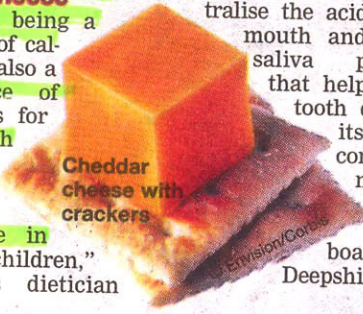
daily portion of brown rice. Agrees Dr Nupur Krishnan, a nutritionist, and adds, "Popcorn contains more fibre by weight than sunflower seeds, keeping you feeling fuller for longer, as well as balancing your blood sugar levels that helps cut down cravings for sweet snacks. You can enjoy it as long as it's not loaded with too much salt or caramel. However, she adds, due to its high Glycemic Index (GI), obese and diabetic people should avoid snacking on popcorn."

Saadia S Dhalley

**O**rganic and natural food products are bursting with nutrients and anti-oxidants. But then so are some sinful snacks! Read on..

## Cheddar cheese

Apart from being a good source of calcium, "It is also a good source of phosphorous for strong teeth and bones and even promotes brain tissue in growing children," says sports dietician



Cheddar cheese with crackers

Deepshikha Agarwal. The zinc content is good for skin, immunity and fertility, riboflavin and Vitamin B12 for energy and Vitamin A for healthy skin and eyes. A cube after a meal will neutralise the acids in your mouth and increase saliva production that helps prevent tooth decay. But its high fat content means you can't go overboard, says Deepshikha.

## Peanut Butter

This one is amongst the richest sources of heart-healthy mono-unsaturated fats. Low in saturated fat, it is an excellent source of protein and fibre which is good for bowel health, and also contains folate that can protect against colon cancer and heart disease. In fact, Harvard Medical School researchers recently reported that snacking on peanut butter five days a week can nearly halve the risk of a heart attack.

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Peanut butter spread

Plus, these health benefits seem to occur without also promoting weight gain — researchers found that people eat less after a snack of peanut butter compared with other snacks.

## Popcorn

Catherine Collins, chief dietician at St George's hospital in London, says, "A small serving of popcorn is equivalent to one

## Chocolate and hazelnut spread

These contains lecithin, a soy extract that is high in protein, calcium and iron, that protects bones, and helps you feel full for longer, says dietician Dr Sonia Kakar. "It's also lower in calories than many jams, is lower-GI for slower-release energy." The anti-oxidants in cocoa help balance blood pressure and reduce blood clotting. And



hazelnuts are an excellent source of heart-healthy polyunsaturated and mono-unsaturated fats, Vitamin E that boosts immunity and B vitamins that improves mood. The potassium, calcium and magnesium help maintain a healthy blood pressure. But a word of caution. "As it's high in sugar and fat, intake should be moderate."