

Say yes to healthy snacking

That's because it has lots of benefits, including weight management, experts tell Norbert Rego

Craving for food is inevitable and so is snacking. For children, it is a fun activity, for teenagers it's an excuse to hang out together, for office-goers, it's the only thing that can beat stress and for the elderly, it is a way to fight off those hunger pangs. In order to get rid of these hunger pangs, healthy snacking seems to be the best option. It has lots of benefits, including weight management. It is all about smart choices. Choose your snack carefully and read the ingredients properly.

A healthy snack is low in fat, especially trans-fat, low in calories, low-cholesterol, baked rather than fried. A multi-grain snack, made from oats, corn, ragi, rice, wheat and flax seeds, is rich in fibre and provides wholesome nutrition. Oats, ragi, wheat have adequate amount of essential amino acids, vitamin B, calcium, iron and rich in cellulose, whereas corn is an excellent source of iron, B-vitamins, magnesium, vitamin C, phosphorous and zinc.

GUILT-FREE SNACKING

Healthy snacking does not mean compromising on your taste preferences. It is only about making the right choices. An informed choice can help you pick snacks that offer health and taste together.

Dietician Dr Rittika Samaddari says, "Healthy snacking boosts metabolism, helps maintain blood sugar and allows for efficient absorption of nutrients. It is a good way to promote healthy long-term eating patterns." Craving is the most common reason for munching across all age

Quick tips

Include foods such as fresh fruits, raw vegetables like carrots, red and green pepper, celery, cucumber. Also opt for low-fat cottage cheese or sautéed vegetables with low-fat dressing, a whole wheat bread vegetable sandwich along with a cup of herbal tea. Other options include whole-grain crackers or snacks like those made from oats or ragi, a handful of roasted nuts like almonds, pistachios, walnuts or sprouted pulses.

— Dr Rittika Samaddari

groups. But with munching becoming a healthier exercise, we don't have to worry about it anymore, adds Dr Samaddari.

The human body is programmed to send out signals whenever it needs an energy boost, which is usually between meals. Clinical nutritionist Dr Nupur Krishnan says, "Nutritionally-rich snacking can be a healthy response to hunger.

It can even help you lose weight by keeping your blood sugar levels steady so that you never get very hungry. Smart snacking doesn't have to be fattening — choose those that will provide balanced nutrition as well as energy."

Some studies show that eating frequent small meals



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GET SMART: Snacking doesn't have to be fattening. Choose foods that will provide nutrition

Quick breakfast

- Boiled egg or egg omelette or poached egg along with multi-grain bread
- Milk or lassi, fruit custard or paneer frankie or fresh fruit milkshake
- Carrot kheer with nuts/muesli with nuts/fruit custard or doodhi kheer with nuts.
- Green chutney sandwich or vegetable sandwich or whole wheat frankie with light vegetable stuffing
- Ragi laddoo, nuts with chemical-free jaggery chikki, peanuts jaggery chikki, amla murabba or apple murabba
- Gajar ka halwa



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Lunch box

- Chatpata channa or rajma chaat
- Veg. sandwich without butter and mayonnaise
- Mango puree can serve as an ice-cream too
- Smashed vegetables with noodles
- Grilled or baked fish
- Vegetables stuffed parantha
- Dal stuffed paratha (Stuffed channa dal paratha) with fresh vegetable raita (cucumber or carrot raita)
- Paris made from green leafy vegetables dough
- Colocasia (arbi) leaves bhajia
- Sprouted moong matki, moath bhel (steamed)
- Multi-veggie masala dosa or steamed sprouted masala stuffed dosa

Evening after play

- Fresh fruit milkshake
- Cornflakes with kurmurra bhel
- Yoghurt with fruit
- Glucose water or glucose with fresh fruit juice
- Lassi or fresh fruit juice
- Mixed vegetable soup
- Dal soup
- Wheat flour pizza with vegetables

— Dr Nupur Krishnan

is a better weight management strategy than eating one or two large meals. The amount of food that a human body needs varies according to height, build, gender, and activity level. Most children usually eat the amount of food that's right for them; however it is up to the parents to make sure that their children have the right foods available to choose from.