

TOPIC

7: yourCHOICE

Snacks: “Chews”
for Health

Skill-Based Outcomes

Preteens who participate in this activity will be able to:

- ❖ Choose snacks for different reasons, and consider the reasons for the choices.
- ❖ Use food labels to make healthful snack choices.
- ❖ Tell how to enjoy snacks without overdoing on the amount.
- ❖ Make an easy food-group snack.

Empowerment
Messages

- ❖ Snacking the right way helps you get enough food to grow and stay healthy. Choose foods that are low in solid fats and added sugars from the five major food groups.
- ❖ Nutrition Facts on food labels can help you compare and choose snacks.
- ❖ Snacking is a great way to fit fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods, and low-fat foods made from milk into your day’s food choices.
- ❖ Pay attention to how much—not just what—you snack on.
- ❖ Move more and sit less. Active fun is a healthful substitute for mindless snacking.

Do You Know...?

Is snacking okay? Yes! Growing preteens need more food energy and nutrients than younger children. That nourishment can come from snacking: mostly low-fat or fat-free choices from the food groups, less saturated fat and *trans* fat, low-nutrient snack choices, and not overdoing it with “too much” of a high-calorie food.

How do snacks fit in? No matter what your age, snacks can help you fill in the MyPyramid gaps by helping you get enough of the foods and nutrients your body needs. Make snacks count toward food-group amounts you need by choosing foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars.

- ❖ *Grains Group*: bagel, pretzels, popcorn, muffin, breakfast cereal, or oatmeal cookie, among others. Look for whole grain snacks.
- ❖ *Vegetables Group and Fruits Group*: raw vegetables, dried fruits, frozen fruit-juice bar, or whole fruits
- ❖ *Milk Group*: low-fat or fat-free string cheese, yogurt, frozen yogurt, or flavored or unflavored milk
- ❖ *Meat and Beans' Group*: hard-cooked egg, slice of meat, or handful of peanuts

Why snack on vegetables? When you choose vegetables, you paint your plate with color! Besides their good looks, dark-green leafy and deep-yellow vegetables can serve up a hefty amount of vitamin A and folate (folic acid), nutrients that help keep you healthy. (Vitamin A is also great for healthy skin.) Plus, these foods are low in fat.

How can you use food labels to make snack choices? Nutrition Facts provide information about your snacks: for example, how big the Serving Size is; how much fat, calcium, iron, and fiber it has; and how many calories one Serving gives. The “5-20% DV” guide helps you see if a food has more or less of some nutrients. Remember: double the numbers (calories and % Daily Values) for two Servings.

What snacks are nutrient dense yet low in fat and easy to make?

Each of these snacks counts toward amounts of foods from two or three food groups.

❖ **Ultra easy, no fuss**

- Low-fat yogurt, topped with fruits and nuts
- Baked corn tortilla chips, sliced cucumbers, jicama, or summer squash with salsa
- Baby carrots and low-fat cheese sticks
- Two or more juices mixed in one glass

❖ **Easy, minor preparation**

- Low-fat ice cream sandwich made with oatmeal cookies
- Microwaved noodle soup mixed with corn or other vegetables, topped with low-fat or fat-free cheese
- Peanut butter sandwich with banana slices or grated carrot

- Cut-up fruit in an unsugared ice cream cone

❖ **A little more effort**

- Fruit smoothie made with low-fat or fat-free yogurt, ice cream or frozen yogurt, or milk and fruit.
- Ham and lettuce rolled up in a soft tortilla
- Raw, chopped veggies and sliced cheese or lean meat, tucked in pita bread with a little salad dressing drizzled on top
- Microwaved potato, topped with salsa or shredded low-fat cheese

How can you snack for good health without giving up foods you like?

- ❖ If you snack on foods that have some fat or sugar, no problem. Try this:
 - Just keep the amount you eat sensible in size: perhaps eat less, share with a friend, or eat them less often.
 - Substitute one snack for a version with less fat or added sugar, for example, fat-free chips for regular chips, frozen yogurt for ice cream, or a bagel for a doughnut.
 - Rather than snack right from the package, put your snack on a plate. That way you won't eat too much. That's good advice no matter what you eat!
- ❖ Move more; sit less. Doing something physically active may even take the place of sitting and snacking.

What if you snack even when you aren't hungry? If you nibble when you're stressed, bored, lonely, or just out of habit, learn to do something in exchange for eating: go for a walk, pick some flowers, clean your room, call a friend!