

Background Information

Ways To Tell If Your Snack Is a Healthy Choice

Is it low in fat?

Use the % Daily Value (DV) column. Recall that if a food has 5% DV or less for a nutrient, it contributes a low amount, while foods having 20% DV or more for a nutrient contribute a high amount. Choose most often snack foods that are lower in total fat, saturated fat, and *trans* fat. Watch out for fried snack foods. Try baked instead. A bag of regular fried potato chips has 15% DV for fat and a bag of baked chips has 5% DV for fat.

Is it low in sugar?

Check the ingredients list. If sugar is one of the first two ingredients, the food is high in sugar. Other names for sugar that you might see on the ingredients list are: table sugar, corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, fructose, maltose, dextrose, corn sugar, honey, or maple syrup. Soda and certain kinds of fruit juices are high in sugar. Choose to drink water or 100% fruit juices that have no added sugar.

Be sure to check the ingredients list!

The ingredients list tells you everything that's in your food. Ingredients are listed from the largest quantity to the smallest quantity by weight. Whatever ingredient your food has the most of will be first on the list, and so on.

Is it high in fiber?

Use the % DV column. Foods with 20% DV or more contribute a large amount of fiber, while foods with 5% DV or less contribute a small amount of fiber. Snack foods that are a good source of fiber are whole-wheat English muffins, pears, almonds, apples, broccoli, and whole-grain cereals.

Is it a whole grain?

Check the ingredient list for the words "whole" or "whole grain" before the grain ingredient's name to decide if a food is made from a whole grain, rather than a refined grain. The primary grain should be the first ingredient in the ingredient list to be considered a "whole grain." Some whole grains, like popcorn or brown rice, do not have the word "whole" in front of their names. Snack foods that are a good source of whole grain are whole-wheat bagels or crackers, whole-grain cereals, oatmeal, or popcorn.

Is it full of vitamins and minerals?

Use the % DV for vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron. If the snack has 20% or more of the % DV it contributes a large amount of a nutrient, while foods with 5% or less of the % DV contribute a small amount.

Snack Tips

Use the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredients list to help you make smarter snack choices!

- Make sure your amounts are sensible. Read the Nutrition Facts label to determine the size of a serving.
- Make snack drinks count. Drink fat-free or 1% milk or 100% fruit or vegetable juice instead of soda or sugar-sweetened fruit drinks.

Choose more often juices that are made from 100% fruit juice and have no added sugar.

- Choose lowfat snack foods. Use the Nutrition Facts label to determine the amount of fat in a serving. Choose most often snacks that have a lower % DV for fat. Foods with 20% DV or more contribute a large amount of a nutrient, while foods that have 5% DV or less contribute a small amount of a nutrient.

Choose More Often:

Whole-grain cereal, bagels, whole-grain crackers, graham crackers, pretzels, lowfat cheese, fat-free yogurt, fruit, vegetables, fig bars, bread sticks

Choose Less Often:

Donuts, sweet bread, butter crackers or saltines, chips, ice cream, cakes, cookies

- Choose foods lower in added sugars. Look at the ingredients list to make sure that sugar is not one of the first two listed.

Watch out for all forms of added sugar: table sugar, corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, fructose, maltose, dextrose, corn sugar, honey, or maple syrup!

- Choose high-fiber snack foods including fresh, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables.

Choose More Often:

Whole-grain ready-to-eat cereals, dried figs, almonds, apple, banana, orange, broccoli, oat bran muffin

Choose Less Often:

Chips, sugar-sweetened cereals, donuts, candy, pies

- Choose whole-grain foods. Look for foods made with whole-grain or whole-wheat flour rather than refined, bleached, or white flour.

Choose More Often:

Whole-wheat flour, whole-wheat or corn tortillas, pretzels, whole-grain crackers and breads, whole-grain cereals, brown rice

Choose Less Often:

Wheat flour, flour tortillas, saltine crackers, butter crackers, potato chips, white bread, sugar-sweetened cereal, white rice

Try These Snacks

Grains

Flavored Popcorn

Spray air-popped popcorn with a nonstick spray and add one of these: chili powder, onion powder, garlic powder, Parmesan cheese, or cinnamon.

Snack Mix

5 cups bite-sized squares cereal, 1/4 cup raisins, 1/4 cup peanuts, 1/4 cup sunflower seeds. Combine all ingredients and store in plastic bags.

Fruits/Vegetables

Quick Pizza

Top an English muffin, bagel, or piece of pita bread with tomato sauce; vegetables such as broccoli, corn, or zucchini; grated lowfat cheese; and seasonings. Place in a 350° oven to heat and melt cheese.

Frobana Crunch

Cut a banana into 4 pieces. Dip in fruit-flavored yogurt or peanut butter and roll in crushed graham crackers, and freeze.

Meat and Beans

Beans and Baked Tortilla Chips

Cover chips with 1/2 cup whole or refried beans and 1/4 cup shredded lowfat cheddar cheese. Cook in microwave until cheese is melted. Top with fresh tomatoes and lettuce.

Milk

Fruit Shake

Chop your favorite fruit, add 1/4 cup chilled apple juice and 1 cup flavored lowfat or fat-free yogurt. Blend chopped fruit, apple juice, and yogurt until smooth.

Quesadillas

Cut corn tortillas into six triangles. Top with green chilies and a little grated lowfat mozzarella cheese. Place in a 350° oven to crisp tortilla and melt cheese.

Other Snacks

Vanilla wafers
Rice and marshmallow bars

Fruit Spritzer

1 can unsweetened 100% frozen juice concentrate, and club soda. Mix juice concentrate according to directions on the can. Substitute club soda for water.

Crispy Sweet Potato Wedges

Cut a sweet potato into wedges. Spray with cooking spray and bake at 450° until crispy on the outside and tender on the inside (about 25 minutes).

Other Snacks

1% lowfat chocolate milk
String cheese with whole-wheat crackers
Non-fat pudding with berries