



FOOD MEDICINE

Every Bite Matters

REAL FOOD SNACKS

Real food snacks can be an excellent source of nourishment throughout your day. It's important to know that there is a substantial difference between real food snacks and ultra-processed food snacks. While processed food snacks can be enjoyed as part of a healthy diet, including real food snacks as part of your overall eating patterns is important for any health goal.

- **Real food snacks** are foods with wholesome ingredients from the five food groups: dairy, whole grains, fruits, veggies and proteins (meat and non-meat sources).
- **Real food snacks** do not contain synthetic ingredients (ingredients only food manufacturers have access to), alternative sweeteners or too much added sugar (more than 5% per serving).
- **Real food snacks** may have a food label (i.e., crackers). Always look to the ingredient list to determine if it is a real food. If you could get all ingredients yourself, it is a real food!



SNACK OPTIONS

Real food snacking can be easy and individualized. Below are some ideas to get you started – but any real food is an option for snacking so eat what you like from the wholesome 5 food groups.

- Plain yogurt with berries and some honey
- Apples/Banana with unsweetened peanut butter
- Ants on a log (celery, peanut butter and raisins)
- Handful of nuts and a piece of fruit
- Cheese and whole grain crackers
- Hummus and whole grain crackers or vegetables
- Turkey and cheese roll-ups
- Homemade granola and/or granola bars
- Whole grain toast with nut butter
- Carrot and celery sticks with homemade ranch
- Roasted chickpeas or hummus with veggies
- Blue corn chips and salsa
- Cottage cheese with canned pineapple
- Homemade “energy balls”
- Cherry tomatoes and mozzarella
- Hardboiled eggs
- Air-popped popcorn with Parmesan cheese

MINIMIZE YOUR CONSUMPTION OF ULTRA-PROCESSED SNACKS!

Always look to a snack's ingredient list to make sure what you're eating is real food.

Continued >

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HEALTH BENEFITS OF REAL FOOD SNACKS

1 Increased Energy

Wholesome snacking helps increase energy because real food helps stabilize our blood sugar levels. This helps us feel full and avoid the highs and lows of unstable blood sugar that can create cravings, sleepiness and an overall ill feeling.

2 Improved Mood

Did you know that our brains are connected to our guts? That means what we eat directly affects our mood (and vice versa, how we feel directly affects our digestion). Nourishing snacks between meals can help keep our brains healthy and happy!

3 Numerous Nutrients

Eating a variety of real food snacks throughout the day can help meet the nutrition requirements needed for us to function well. No one food, or food group, contains all we need. Real food snacks help to fill the nutritional gaps in our diets.

4 Using Food as Medicine

Research shows chronic inflammation can be the root of disease. Using real food snacks as preventive medicine can help minimize inflammation in our bodies that is caused by many factors, including stress, lack of sleep, dehydration and others.

All foods and food products can be a part of a healthy eating pattern! Your favorite processed food snacks are not off limits but including more real food snacks over too many ultra-processed food snacks can help you overcome health issues, maintain or lose weight, and keep you satisfied until meal times.

- Try adding more real food snacks to your day to balance your nutrition
- You may find better options if you start looking at food labels.

DON'T FEEL DEPRIVED

Looking for a crunch?

Try sliced veggies with dip, whole grain crackers with cheese or air-popped popcorn sprinkled with cheese.

Craving something sweet?

Fruit is sweet! Pair it with peanut butter or yogurt or mix it in a smoothie for on-the-go snacking.

Missing the salt?

Unless you have diagnosed hypertension, enjoy salted foods like nuts, cheese, crackers or toast with peanut butter.

