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Snack Pack

By [Yelena Moroz](#)



Credit: <http://www.cleo.co.nz>

The phrase, “I am hungry” comes up way too often. I bet you’re probably hungry at this very moment. Although it’s completely normal to feel hunger, many of us don’t actually know what real hunger feels like. “Any kind of sensation or emotion has people reaching for food,” says **Shelly Lummus, RN, FNP**, and director of **Lindora Online**, a medical weight control system. As a result, it’s common to eat, eat, and eat without much thought. Snacking, on the other hand, can put you on the right track.

Look at snacking as a regular fuel source that will make your body work more efficiently and keep you from overeating at meals. Plus, it will keep your brain sharp as a tack. No more midday crash! Snacking is easy and delicious. “If you go more than four hours between meals, you’ll want to include a snack,” says Target Health and Nutrition expert, **Dr. Susan Mitchell, RD**. No need to chain-and-ball yourself to boring 100 calorie snack packets. In fact, those mini portions of Oreo’s and Cheese Nips are still (processed) treats that fail to pack the nutritional punch of real food.

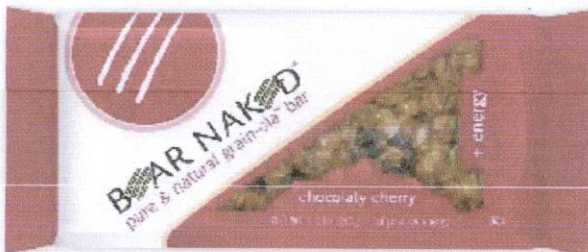
Instead, go nuts! “Nut and seed butters are a healthy snack for active women. They are high in magnesium and essential fats which are important for energy and proper metabolism,” says **Carolyn Dean MD, ND**, Medical Director of the Nutritional Magnesium Association. “Magnesium is necessary for the enzymes that digest food — if you don’t metabolize your carbs properly they end up being stored as fat and this impedes fitness. Known as the anti-stress mineral, magnesium supports fitness and exercise as it relaxes the body and muscles allowing for faster recovery.”

Nut butters can be used in many creative ways, like on apple or whole wheat waffles. The fiber combined with the protein will hold you over until your next meal without a problem.



If you're on the go, make your own trail mix with equal parts of nuts and dried fruit, recommends Mitchell. **Sunsweet Antioxidant Blend** is a good choice because it offers blueberries, cherries, cranberries and plums in one bag. Combine with walnuts, pistachios, and almonds into $\frac{1}{4}$ cup portions. As tempting as it may be, eating the whole bag will give you calorie overload. Divide the portions and pack into Ziploc baggies for portion control. When you're munching, slow down and pay attention, and you'll enjoy the snack more.

When ever you crave candy, make your own. Stuff a few dry apricots with almonds or munch on a **Sunsweet One**, an individually packed prune. "Just remember that dry fruit is dehydrated and a handful can equate to a basket of apricots or plums", says Lummus.



Granola bars also make a good snack, as long as they stay within the 300 calorie limit. **Bear Naked Pure & Natural Grain-ola Bar** will certainly give you something to chew on. Unlike typical granola bars that often leave you with a dry mouth and dehydrated flavor, **Bear Naked Pure & Natural** is a pleasure to munch on and will definitely keep you full until your next meal.



If you're craving something sweet, dip your spoon into the new **Kozy Shack SimplyWell** pudding; it comes in decadent flavors like green tea chai, lemon ginger, pear mangosteen and of course, classics like French vanilla and dark chocolate. Each cup is 100 calories and contains 3g of protein and fiber; 10% of vitamin E and calcium; plus, at least 10% of vitamin D. Eat it as a pick-me-up during the day or as a much healthier dessert.



In place of a frappuccino run, make like a school girl and sip a carton of **ZenSoy Soy on the go Cappuccino**. First of all, it's perfect if you're looking for gluten and lactose free snacks. Secondly, each carton offers 32g Omega-3 DHA, which will get your marbles rolling. Finally, it contains 7g of protein, and a healthy dose of calcium, vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin B12 and riboflavin. Best of all, **ZenSoy Cappuccino** is yummy, so you won't miss your sugar laden coffee drinks.



Bored of typical snacks? Get creative. Nutritionists often suggest drinking a glass of water to test if your body is truly hungry. If the thought of bland water still sends you to the vending machines, try **Fruit2O Essentials**. These sweet tasting waters will hold you over and nourish with important vitamins and minerals (equal to the amount found in 2 servings of fruit) at the cost of zero calories and zero grams of sugar. Sure, a bottle of flavored water might not count as a true snack, but it may help you have control when looking at the menu. The fruit flavor combinations include blueberry pomegranate, citrus and cranberry raspberry, among others. You can even freeze them into popsicles or use as mixers for alcoholic drinks... but that's another story.



Yoplait FiberOne Key Lime Pie yogurt makes another excellent snack with only 50 calories. It will satisfy any sweet tooth, even though a little container contains only 4g of sugar. Eat it plain, add some granola or fresh fruit; add to a smoothie or just freeze for an individual container of frozen yogurt. It's also rich in protein, calcium, potassium and, of course, fiber.



The 4 o'clock vending machine runs typically send you in search of something salty. Don't succumb to processed chips or crackers, make your own fiesta with **Chi-Chi's Snackers** salsa. You can pop these into your lunch back with a few homemade chips; just toast a seasoned whole wheat tortilla or pita in the oven for a few minutes. You'll get a dose of vitamin C, (15% of your daily value, to be exact), at 35 calories. The homemade chips shouldn't contain more than 100 to 150 calories.

"A snack helps keep your energy levels up, makes blood glucose more stable and keeps stress levels down," says Mitchell. "Stress and emotional eaters particularly benefit from snacks." When you choose snacks, check the nutrition label to make sure that both protein and fiber are present, but the amount of sugar is low. Four grams equal to one teaspoon of sugar.

Snacking doesn't mean that you need to load up on fat free fair. "Fat does provide some satiety or feeling of fullness," adds Mitchell. The rule of thumb: keep snacks low in total and saturated fats, and stay away from anything that contains trans fats.

The objective of healthy snacking is to distinguish between physical hunger and a desire to eat as a result of cravings, stress or boredom.

"I am a firm believer in snacking," says Lummus. "It helps with portion control and makes people recognize hunger, keeping them satisfied, not stuffed."

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