

HEALTHY SNACKS ON THE RUN

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Who says snacks need to consist of potato chips, marshmallows or cookies? Snacks can be good for our bodies and give us added energy if we make wise choices. Healthy snacks, that taste good too, can help us meet our daily nutritional needs. Children, in particular need healthy snacks that provide the essential nutrients and satisfy their growing bodies.

Some of my favorite snacks are traditional favorites – such as fresh veggie sticks and fruits, whole grain Melba toast, fat-free cheese mixed with a little dill and yogurt combined with whole grain cereal, fat-free cottage cheese and fresh fruit. There are also dozens of protein and carbohydrate-rich snacks such as protein bars and trail mixes with unsalted nuts to satisfy your sugar cravings. However, preparing your own healthy snacks at home and storing them in the car and in your desk at work will give you no excuse to go to the vending machine. For some healthy snack choices simply mix 2 or 3 of the following:

- **Fruits** – a fresh summer fruit salad of peaches, strawberries, plums, raspberries, grapes and cherries.
- **Vegetables** - get a good crunch with raw vegetables such as baby carrots, broccoli, mushrooms, cauliflower, cucumber, celery and tomatoes.
- **Whole Grains** – whole wheat Melba toast, whole wheat pitas, rice cakes, fibrous cereals, unsalted pretzels and whole wheat breads.
- **Seeds and Nuts** - almonds, walnuts sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds.
- **Beverages** – herbal teas, 100% fruit juices, fat-free milk and of course water.
- **Others** - plain popcorn, low-fat cream cheese and salsas or chutneys (low in sodium and made with fresh fruits or vegetables).

Combine the foods above and store them in easy to serve containers to take with you – don't be afraid to be creative.

- **Raw vegetables** are best served chopped or striped with a low-fat dip (try dipping them in a mixture of cottage cheese, low-fat cream cheese and dill spice).
- Cut **fresh fruits** in halves or slices. Dip them in plain yogurt.
- Add dry-roasted nuts to your oatmeal, cereal, salads and yogurt to create a crunchy treat.
- Combine dry foods (**grain cereals**) and dry protein (**nuts**) with wet foods (**fruits, squeezed fruit juices or milk and yogurt**) to satisfy a sweet tooth.
- Prepare the snacks in advance. Keep cut up fruits and vegetables in small Ziploc bags in the fridge, so they're ready for you to grab and go.
- If your snack is a mix of wet and dry foods, store them separately in plastic containers avoid a soggy mess.
- Take healthy snacks with you hiking, biking, to work and to the gym. Use them to create a small meal of equal amounts protein and carbohydrates every 2 ½ to 3 hours.