

Diabetes: Healthy Snacks

Is it OK to include snacks in my diabetic meal plan?

You may include snacks in your meal plan because:

- ✓ Snacks help you balance the food you eat with the medicines you take.
- ✓ You need to spread the carbohydrates that you eat more evenly throughout the day to help decrease spikes in your blood sugar after meals.
- ✓ You have other health conditions that require some snacking.

The need to eat between meals or before bed depends on your blood sugar control and your daily recommended calories. Active children and adolescents with high energy needs usually need to add snacks. Snacks help make sure they get enough calories and nutrition each day. Snacks can also help to prevent low blood sugar. Adults on a diet with fewer calories and carbohydrates may not need to snack if their blood sugar stays in the recommended range between meals.

Which foods are good snacks in a diabetic diet?

The snacks listed below are all low in saturated fat. Many are made with whole grains and are high in fiber. Snacks that are a good source of protein are marked with a star. Snacks that contain 15 to 30 grams of carbohydrate fit into most diabetic meal plans.

Snacks containing **1 carbohydrate choice (about 15 grams of carbohydrate):**

- ✓ 1 medium apple or any round fresh fruit
- ✓ 18 small pretzel twists
- ✓ 10 multigrain honey graham mini rice cakes
- ✓ 18 white cheddar soy crisps*
- ✓ 2 whole-grain white cheddar or butter popcorn rice cakes (natural flavor, light salt)
- ✓ 1/2 small (2-oz) whole-wheat bagel with fat-free cream cheese
- ✓ 3 cups of air-popped or low-fat microwave popcorn
- ✓ 1/2 cup light tuna or egg salad in 1/2 of a whole-wheat pita
- ✓ whole Thomas Light Multi-Grain English muffin topped with tomato sauce and 1 oz low-fat mozzarella cheese and then baked
- ✓ baby carrots or broccoli and cauliflower tops with low-fat or nonfat dressings for dipping (2 cups raw vegetables and 1/2 cup nonfat creamy dressing)
- ✓ celery with nonfat cream cheese and 2 tablespoons of raisins or dried cranberries
- ✓ 8-oz cup of 1% or skim milk*

- ✓ low-fat or nonfat flavored milk prepared with sugar-free flavoring mix (both Nesquik and Carnation Instant Breakfast brands have sugar-free products available)*
- ✓ 6 to 8-oz carton of light yogurt (sweetened with NutraSweet or Splenda)*
- ✓ about 6 homemade breaded and baked chicken breast nuggets*
- ✓ 4 to 5 vanilla wafers
- ✓ 1 and 1/2 graham crackers
- ✓ 1/2 cup of low-fat ice cream
- ✓ 2 tablespoons of raisins
- ✓ 1/2 cup of unsweetened applesauce
- ✓ 1 fruit roll-up
- ✓ 1 fruit juice bar

Snacks containing 2 carbohydrate choices (about 30 grams of carbohydrate):

- ✓ 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese with 3/4 cup pineapple chunks in own juice*
- ✓ 1 large banana or 2 medium servings of fresh fruit
- ✓ 1 cup of multigrain Cheerios with 1/2 cup skim milk
- ✓ 1 small (2 oz) whole-wheat bagel with fat-free cream cheese
- ✓ 1 mozzarella cheese stick (part-skim) with 1 cup of fruit chunks and 6 to 8 low-fat, whole-wheat crackers*
- ✓ small baked potato, topped with 1/2 cup bean chili
- ✓ 1/2 turkey and low-fat Swiss cheese sandwich with mustard and a medium fruit or 1 cup of 1% or skim milk*
- ✓ 1 low-fat granola bar
- ✓ 4-oz individual fruit cup and 1 cup of 1% or skim milk*
- ✓ 1 cup of sugar-free pudding
- ✓ 1/4 cup dried fruit
- ✓ 2 caramel corn rice cakes
- ✓ 1 cereal bar
- ✓ 1 oz of baked tortilla chips with 1/4 cup salsa
- ✓ 15 baked potato chips (1 oz bag equals 1 and 1/2 carbohydrate choices)
- ✓ 14 animal crackers and 1/2 cup 1% or skim milk
- ✓ 2 fig cookies and 1/2 cup 1% or skim milk
- ✓ 8 oz low-fat or nonfat chocolate milk (regular sugar sweetened)*

Protein snacks (between meal pick-me-ups that won't increase blood sugar levels):

- ✓ 1/4 cup natural nuts (peanuts, walnuts, or almonds) equals 1 protein and 2 healthy fat servings (about 200 calories)
- ✓ celery with 2 tablespoons of peanut butter equals 1 protein and 3 healthy fat servings (about 180 calories). Look for natural peanut butter with no trans fats
- ✓ 2 fat-free mozzarella cheese sticks equal 2 protein servings (about 90 calories)

Cool Snacks for Hot Days

➤ **Yogurt Creamsicles**

Combine:

1/2 cup plain skim-milk yogurt (1/2 carb)

1/2 cup fruit juice concentrate, undiluted (3 carbs)

Freeze in Popsicle molds until solid.

The total mixture equals about 3 and 1/2 carb choices and makes about 4 Creamsicles or 1 carb choice per Creamsicle.

➤ **Fruit Popsicles**

Blend:

1 and 1/2 cup fresh fruit: berries, peaches, or bananas (2 carbs)

1/2 cup apple juice concentrate, undiluted (3 carbs)

Freeze in Popsicle molds until solid.

The total mixture equals 5 carb choices and yields about 5 Popsicles, or 1 carb choice per Popsicle.

Store-brand sugar-free Popsicles often equal less than 1/2 carb choice.

Special Suggestions

- Fresh fruit is better than juice as a routine snack unless your blood sugar is low.
- You can add flavor to milk with sugar-free flavorings, such as sugar-free cocoa.
- If you are still hungry after a snack, try sugar-free Popsicles or Jell-O. Or make up a vegetable tray using cold crunchy vegetables and a fat-free dressing for a dip.
- If you are on a high-calorie meal plan, the carbohydrate content of snacks can be as high as 60 grams (4 carb choices) per snack.

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