

Diabetes: Tips for Healthy Snacks



Eating healthy snacks is an important part of your meal plan for diabetes. Work with your doctor and a registered dietitian to create a meal plan that includes regular snacks. You need the right balance of carbohydrate, protein, and fat all through the day.

Knowing when to snack and what to eat can help you keep your blood sugar stable at healthy levels.

When should you snack?

Eat your meals and snacks at the same time each day.

If you are hungry or have problems with low blood sugar between meals, eat a snack between your breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If you have problems with low blood sugar during the night, have a small snack before you go to bed. If you aren't having problems with low blood sugar, you may not need snacks.

If you're at risk of having low blood sugar between meals, ask your doctor about whether your medicines may need to be adjusted.

What should you eat?

Overall, try to eat a wide range of foods. Spread carbohydrate all through the day. This will give you a ready supply of energy and help control your blood sugar.

Carbohydrate raises blood sugar higher and more quickly than any other nutrient. Carbohydrate is found in sugar, breads and cereals, fruit, starchy vegetables such as potatoes and corn, and milk and yogurt. Try to eat whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables when you choose your carbohydrate instead of white bread, crackers, or fruit or vegetable juices.

Protein and fat do not raise blood sugar very much. If you are hungry, choose snacks that combine protein and fat with carbohydrate.

Each snack should contain about 15 grams of carbohydrate. Examples of 15 grams include 1 slice of bread, 5 or 6 crackers, or 1 medium apple or orange.

Try the following:

- A medium piece of fresh fruit. Or eat a small piece of fruit with a tablespoon of peanut butter
- Half a turkey or ham sandwich on whole-grain bread
- One small corn tortilla with one or two slices of shredded low-fat cheese or turkey
- A small handful of almonds, walnuts, or pecans

When you snack, the trick is to not eat too much. Do not eat out of a bag or box. Use a small bowl or plate instead. Measure your portions. This way, it is easier to keep track of how much you eat. Do not snack while you read, watch TV, or work on the computer. You lose track of how much you eat.

What are good quick-sugar foods?

If you take medicine for diabetes, you are at risk for having low blood sugar. You need to have some food with you at all times that can raise your blood sugar fast.

Foods that will help raise your blood sugar quickly include:

Food	Amount
Table sugar	1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons)
Fruit juice or regular (not diet) soda pop	½ to ¾ cup (4 to 6 ounces)
Honey	1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons)
Hard candy	6 Life Savers
Glucose tablets	3 to 4 tablets

If you have problems with low blood sugar, do not skip or delay snacks.