

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Snacks

What makes a healthy snack?

A good-for-you snack is one that's high in nutritional value (protein, vitamins, minerals, fiber) but relatively low in calories, total fat, saturated fat (no trans fat), sugar, and sodium. The most important part of that equation is "high in nutritional value." Nuts, for example, are high in fat and calories, but they are also loaded with nutrients we need, which makes them a healthy snack choice.

While fresh veggies and fruits make super-healthy snacks, those items aren't always convenient (or the most popular snack choices in a typical family).

Common healthy snacks: fruits, vegetables (carrots, celery, cucumbers, etc.), moderate amount of nuts (cashews, pecans, almonds, etc.), boiled eggs, low-sugar granola bars, beef or turkey jerky, fruit yogurt, homemade fresh fruit popsicles

What makes an unhealthy snack?

Not-so-healthy snack choices are usually low in nutritional value but high in calories, total fat, saturated fat (and sometimes trans fat), sugars, or sodium.

Common unhealthy snacks: chips, doughnuts, pizza, flavored yogurt, cookies, high-sugar granola bars, ice cream

How to make healthier food choices

In order to make healthier food choices, you need to read the label of the food you want to eat. By looking at the first 3-5 ingredients listed on the package you can determine the nutritional benefits. On the Nutrition Facts label, keep an eye out for the calories, total fat, saturated and trans fat, grams of sugar, and milligrams of sodium and then compare them to other similar products.

Making Healthier Choices	
Instead of this:	Try this:
Croissants, biscuits, white breads and rolls	Low-fat whole grain breads and rolls (wheat, rye and pumpernickel)
Fried vegetables or vegetables served with cream, cheese, or butter sauces	All vegetables that are raw, steamed, broiled, baked, or tossed with a very small amount of olive oil and salt and pepper
Regular ground beef	Lean or extra-lean ground beef, ground chicken, and turkey breast
Whole or 2% milk	Nonfat or 1% milk
Shortening, butter or margarine	Olive, soybean and canola oils

Check for Understanding

- What are some common healthy and unhealthy snack options?

- Complete the chart with 5 unhealthy snacks you have eaten this past week and what you could have eaten as a healthier option.

Unhealthy snacks eaten last week:	Healthy alternatives:

- How will eating healthier snacks vs. unhealthy snacks affect your physical performance?

Coach's Reflection: