

## - Snack foods

## Is snacking good or bad?

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Snacking is considered healthy by some while there is another school of thought which does not agree with it. For a young mom, snacking is tiresome, for an office goer, it's easy to go and grab food, and for a health-conscious person, it is great to rely on until the next meal.



### What is a snack?

A snack is defined as a small meal or a beverage taken in between meals. It can be once a day or a few hours after every meal. Sometimes, it sets a biological clock, and our tummy starts giving hunger signals at a certain time after meals. Sometimes, it is the location, social environment, appetising food or just a dip in energy levels that makes one go for a snack, irrespective of whether it is healthy or not.

### PROS AND CONS Effect of snacking on weight management

There is a strong belief that snacking increases metabolism which, in turn, can help in weight management. Eating six small meals instead of three main meals is a great way to boost metabolism. Logically, it makes sense, but it varies from individual to individual and from one snack to another in the same individual.

Small meals throughout the day can keep one full and avoid large swings in hunger levels but, at the same time, give more occasions to consume more calories. For example, taking 100 calories extra in every snack will mean taking 600 calories more during the day. Hence, some of the latest research indicates that snacking does not boost metabolism or help in weight loss but rather keeps one hungry throughout the day.

### Effect of snacking on diabetes management

Tufts Medical Centre suggested that snacking can help in stabilising blood sugar levels. As carbohydrates are spread out throughout the day, medicine along with snacks can help control sugar highs and hunger pangs in diabetics. But again, it's not all snacks, the ones that are high in fibre and protein, and sourced from plant foods, are more satisfying and nutrition

ally healthy.

### Tips to snack healthily

☒ Focus on Nutrient-dense foods - Foods that have a high nutrient content for the number of calories that they contain are nutrient-dense. Foods like, fruits, nuts, legumes, and veggies are nutrient-dense. For example, one banana (100g) gives around 80kcal, while the

same amount of banana chips, will give 500kcal. Not just the kcal but the nutrients that banana brings are tremendous and no match to chips.

✘ Make sure the amount of food taken in every snack is in moderation and not in excess.

✘ Keep snacking 2-3 times a day and not more.

✘ Try adding proteins and high-fibre food to every snack, as they keep one full till the next meal. Nuts, seeds, nut butter, low-fat dairy, beans, fruits, and veggie sticks are some of the examples.

✘ Keep portable snacks as mentioned above, when on the move.

✘ Be mindful of why you are snacking. If it's really because of hunger pangs and the next meal is quite late, it is fine, but eating anytime because of boredom, or stress is cause for concern.