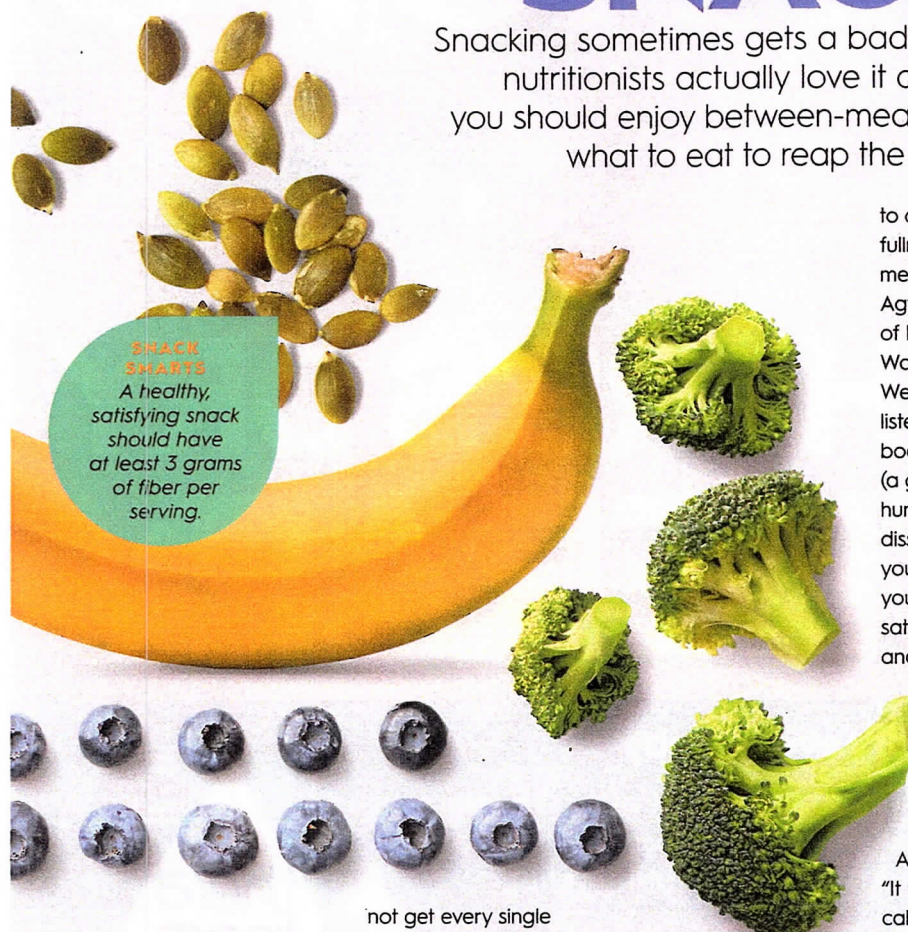


WHY EVERYONE NEEDS SNACK TIME

Snacking sometimes gets a bad reputation, but nutritionists actually love it done right. Five reasons you should enjoy between-meal nibbles and what to eat to reap the biggest benefits.



SNACK SMARTS
A healthy, satisfying snack should have at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE NUTRITION

It's time to rethink the purpose of a snack, says NYC dietitian Samantha Cassetty, M.S., R.D., coauthor of *Sugar Shock*. A snack doesn't merely satisfy a craving; it's also a way to get nutrients from fruits, vegetables, or whole grains. "You may

not get every single vitamin and mineral and enough fiber at all three meals," Cassetty says. "A snack helps you amp up your daily nutrient intake."

► **SNACK ON THIS**
Cassetty suggests a snack that includes a fruit or vegetable and another nutrient-rich food that has healthy fat or protein to keep you satisfied. "With that formula you can go in a number of different directions," she says. Think: pumpkin seeds and a banana, grape tomatoes and cheese on whole grain

crackers, fresh berries and yogurt, or cinnamon-sprinkled apples with either a nut or seed butter.

IT HELPS STOP OVEREATING

"When you skip a meal or go a long time without eating, your body shifts into survival mode and craves food, which may cause you

to overeat beyond fullness at the next meal," says Valerie Agyeman, R.D., founder of Flourish Heights Women's Nutrition and Wellness. She suggests listening to your body's hunger cues (a growling stomach, hunger that doesn't dissipate). "Ultimately, you want to make sure your meals and snacks satisfy your hunger and nutritional needs," Agyeman says.

► **SNACK ON THIS**
"Yogurt is a nutritious, satiating option," Agyeman says.

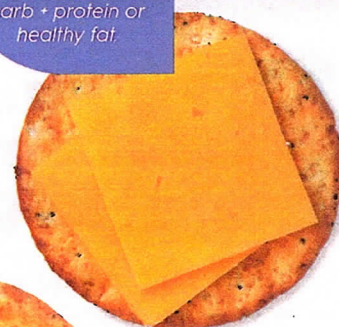
"It has protein, calcium, vitamins, and probiotics, which can enhance the gut microbiome." Avoid yogurts with added sugar (check nutrition info on the label) or opt for plain and punch up the flavor with berries, raw honey, cinnamon, unsweetened coconut, or your favorite low-sugar add-ins. Some savory choices: grape tomatoes, nuts, plantain chips.

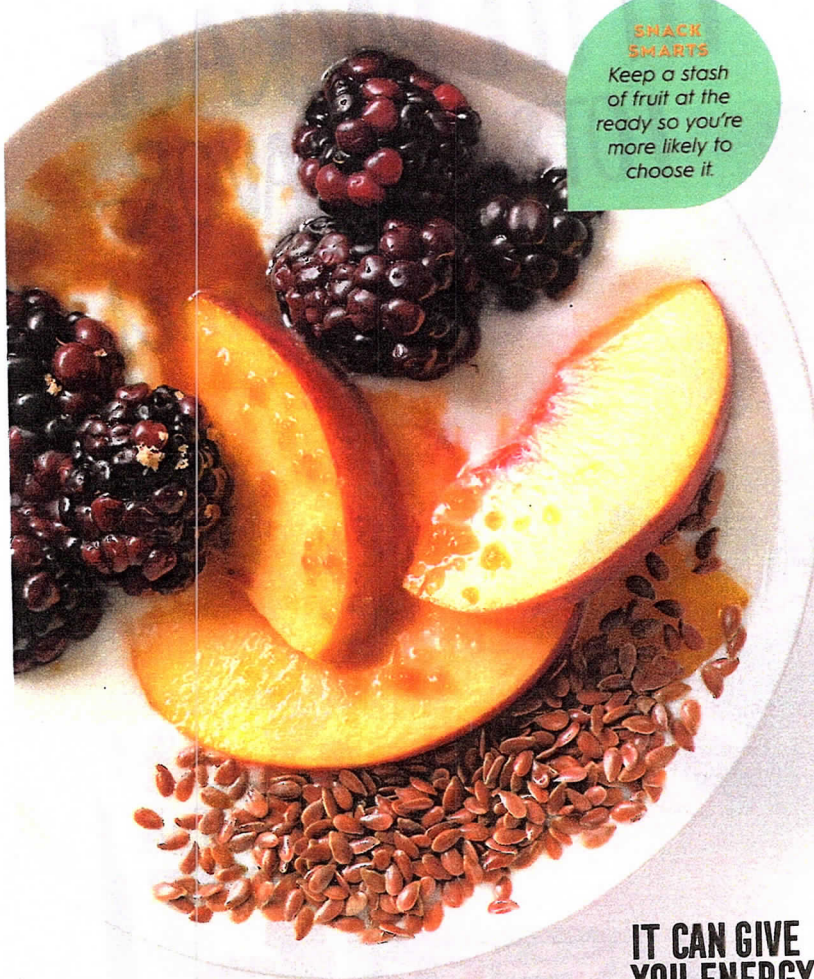
IT CAN KEEP YOU FROM GETTING HANGRY

You know that cranky feeling you get, and you realize it's been a while since you've eaten? That's a drop in blood sugar, which affects mood as well as energy. Regular snacking helps keep blood sugar stable throughout the day, Agyeman says.

► **SNACK ON THIS**
A combo of a complex carb and protein is the way to go. Complex carbs (whole grains, high-fiber fruits and veggies) are digested more slowly than simple carbs so they prevent blood sugar dips. Protein slows the rate carbs break down, helping your blood sugar (and energy) stay steady.

SNACK SMARTS
The ideal combo to satisfy hunger: complex carb + protein or healthy fat.





SNACK SMARTS
Keep a stash of fruit at the ready so you're more likely to choose it.

IT CAN HELP YOU SLEEP

A growling stomach is a surefire sleep stopper. That's when the after-dinner snack comes into play. Yes, it can be sweet, says Amy Gorin, M.S., R.D.N., a Connecticut-based dietitian. Eating after dinner may seem like a no-no, but Gorin says it's OK as long as you save some of your daily calorie quota for then and practice portion control.

▶ SNACK ON THIS

Try a dessert-like bite that includes protein (milk, cheese, light ice cream), fiber (berries), or a healthy fat (chocolate nut butter paired with apple slices). Gorin's favorite: a decaf latte with a dash of unsweetened cocoa powder and five or six prunes. "I'm getting protein from the milk, plus the natural sweetness, vitamins, minerals in the prunes," she says. Another fave: blackberries or raspberries sprinkled with nutmeg and 2 Tbsp. almonds, walnuts, or pistachios.

IT CAN GIVE YOU ENERGY TO STAY FOCUSED

Despite what generations have grown up hearing, eating candy and other sugar-laden foods doesn't actually give you a jolt of energy to power through an activity or task. "Studies

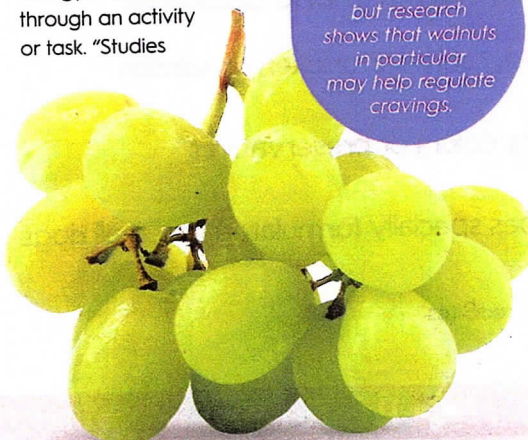
show the opposite: People experience more fatigue and less focus when they eat sugary foods," Cassetty says. What you need is a snack that delivers steady energy to help you stay productive. That means produce and protein or healthy fat—all of which your body digests slowly.

▶ SNACK ON THIS

"When I need an afternoon snack, I'll typically eat a combo of a fruit and nuts or seeds, like grapes and walnuts or a clementine and pumpkin seeds," Cassetty says.



SNACK SMARTS
All nuts are good, but research shows that walnuts in particular may help regulate cravings.



SNACK ATTACK

DIG INTO THESE EATS

Sometimes a packaged snack is the easiest thing to reach for, and there are many healthy options. But look at the ingredient list: The shorter, the better, and most—if not all—the ingredients should be whole foods. A few top picks:

BELGIOIOSO FONTINA SNACKING CHEESE

Each ¾ oz. package has 5 g of protein.

ANGIE'S BOOMCHICKAPOP LIGHT KETTLE CORN

Whole grain popcorn satisfies a sweet tooth and a salty craving.

BIENA CHICKPEA SNACKS SEA SALT

You get 6 g of protein and fiber, plus potassium and iron.

BARE SNACKS FRUIT & VEGGIE CHIPS

A take-anywhere serving of crunchy fruits and vegetables.

KIND MINIS DARK CHOCOLATE CHERRY CASHEW

Tastes like a candy bar but has only 2 g of added sugar.

BLUE DIAMOND NUT-THINS

Crackers made with almond and rice flour provide a hit of protein; each serving has 3 g. ■