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# WELLNESS WEEKLY

## Snack Healthy

Vending machines are generally a convenient way to grab a snack while you're at work. However, most vending machine options like chips, cookies, crackers, and candy are loaded with calories and artery-clogging trans fats. The best way to avoid consuming these types of snacks is to plan ahead and make a snack in advance.

One of the biggest myths about snacking is that it's a bad thing. The truth is that it's not snacking itself that's bad for us; it is the type of snack being consumed. When you eat until you are comfortable (not "full") at lunch, chances are you will need a mid-afternoon snack to fuel your body and keep your energy up until dinner.

### 5 Tips for Smart Snacking

- 1. Give healthy snacks a chance.** If you try some of the healthier snack alternatives out there, you may find that you actually enjoy them. Healthy snacks can be just as satisfying as unhealthy ones and you can snack without the guilt. Try Low Fat Kettle Crisps, Baked Tostitos, or Reduced Fat Triscuits for salty healthy snacks.
- 2. Avoid trans fats.** Trans fats are trouble for your body. They raise "bad" and lower "good" cholesterol. The type of food they tend to lurk in most is snack foods – things like crackers, snack cakes and pies, frozen fried microwave snacks, and cookies. Anything with "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" listed among the top three ingredients on the label is questionable.
- 3. Be a label detective.** Don't decide whether to buy a food based on the advertising banners on the front of the package. Check out the Nutrition Information label on the back, too. It is important to pay close attention to serving size. What they say is a serving and what you actually eat may be completely different. The Nutrition Information label also lists the calories, grams of fat, saturated fat, trans fat, and sometimes, grams of sugar.
- 4. Don't snack if you aren't really hungry.** Before having a snack, ask yourself, "am I really hungry?" Many times the answer is no and you are just looking for a way to pass time. Eating should satisfy hunger and if you are not hungry, the only gain that can come from snacking is weight.
- 5. Be careful with energy bars.** There are all kinds of "energy" or "power" bars being marketed under the guise of convenience and good nutrition. The truth is, these carry-anywhere bars can come in handy, but unless you choose carefully they can be loaded with sugar and fat. When picking one, look for at least 3 grams of fiber, at least 5 grams of protein, lower amounts of fat with no saturated fat, and fewer than 20 grams of sugar.

