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# Healthy Snacks & Their Benefits



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Love to snack? Sometimes it's hard to fight those everyday cravings when you're hungry or just want something to munch on. Whether you want to change up your snacking habits a little or a lot, now is the best time to try new foods. For those salty, sweet or chocolatey hankerings, here are simple, healthy and diverse snacks you can grab at any time.

### Diss The Chips

If you're a big fan of salty snacks, it may be hard to lay off crunchy potato chips. A healthier option than a bag of Lay's is a handful of **roasted seaweed snacks**. This crispy, nutritional alternative is loaded with a high density of vitamins and minerals.

Another crunchy snack option is **kale chips**. This type of chip is filled with multiple vitamins and antioxidants for your body. It's also just as good in salads, soups and stir-fries.

Potato chip lovers will be addicted to **plantain snacks**. The yummy banana chip has less sodium than regular chips and

supplies vitamin A and C.

Besides chips, fries are a salty favorite. Cut the fries out and instead chomp on **edamame**, a protein-packed soybean snack that will quench your salty craving. By eating just half a cup, you can lower your cholesterol levels.

## Go Nuts For Nuts (& Seeds)

Nuts are an easy, tasty snack that is perfect to carry on the go. The bite-sized food is packed with vitamins, protein and heart healthy fats. Specifically, **cashews** are rich in nutrients and are known as "nature's vitamin pills." Additionally, **almonds** provide a nice amount of vitamin E, and 14 of them add up to only 98 calories.

Like nuts, seeds are convenient and delicious. **Sunflower seeds** will give you the extra protein, fiber, minerals and vitamin E that your body needs. Not too keen on eating them alone? Go ahead and add them into your cereals and salads.

**Flax seeds** have become popular in the health world. The oils they have are one of the finest plant-based sources for healthy omega-3 fats. Adding one or two tablespoons of flax seeds to your food will provide amazing health advantages such as the prevention of diabetes, heart disease and inflammatory diseases. Try adding these seeds to your protein shakes, smoothies and baked goods.

For a spicy kick, **wasabi peas** can do the trick. This snack can be addicting, but it's okay because 1/3 cup of them is only 100 calories.

## Fruity Delight

Sometimes you need to give into that sweet craving. Fruit is the best alternative to candy. Eating half of a **grapefruit** every day will provide more fiber than an apple, banana or orange. On the smaller side, **pomegranate seeds** are a sweet and refreshing treat. This fruit will fill your sugary void and help lower your systolic blood pressure. **Kiwi** is another fruity snack that is rich in minerals, vitamins and antioxidants. In fact, a kiwi has more or just as much potassium as a banana.

Dried fruit can replace sugary gummy candies that are bad for your body and teeth. **Dried apricots** are known as "nature's candy" and offer vitamins A, C, iron, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium. Even better, dried apricots have been shown to lower the risk of lung, larynx and esophagus.

Used to love Fruit Roll-Ups? Well, **fruit leather** has the same flattened shape and is way healthier than the candy version. It's made of dried fruit puree sheets, usually with fruits like apples, pears and plums, to give it a natural sweetened taste.

## Dessert Galore

Dessert is the best part of any meal! It's okay to indulge from time to time, but the best kind of dessert is the dessert that's filling, delicious and packed with promising benefits. When cravings hit, **dark chocolate** is the way to go. Dark chocolate is loaded with stearic and palmitic acids that can play a role in lowering the risk of heart disease.

Enjoy ice cream? Well **frozen yogurt** is a healthier version of this cold treat. Plus, as an added bonus, yogurt stays colder longer, so there's less of a mess to clean up.

**Cottage cheese** has calcium and vitamin D and high levels of selenium that help develop healthy skin. Cottage cheese can be put on fruit, crackers, yogurt and any other foods you dare to try with it!

## Juice It

Besides water, there are other substitutions for healthy drinks. Try **coconut water** with its sweet taste and nutritious health benefits. Coconut water or coconut milk is a low-calorie drink and only contains a fifth of the sugar of other fruit juices. The sweet drink is light and not too heavy like many sodas. **Cranberry juice** has all sorts of health and medical benefits. It can prevent and alleviate symptoms for respiratory disorders, cancers, heart diseases, kidney stones and urinary tract infections. The fruity, tart drink is filled with vitamin C that will help fight colds, too.

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