

# HEALTHY SNACKS

Have you been snacking more than usual? Making more trips to the cupboard while working or studying from home?

Snacking doesn't have to be a bad thing – as long as we are mindful of the snacks we are choosing and eating only when we are actually hungry.

A healthy snack often includes a combination of carbohydrates and proteins. Carbohydrates (or carbs) provide our bodies with glucose (or sugar) that is converted into energy to support functions of the body. Carbohydrates often get a bad rap but they are an essential part of a healthy diet. The key is considering the type of carbohydrate you are choosing. Complex (often unprocessed) carbohydrates like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are healthier than simple (often processed) carbohydrates like soda, pastries, and chips. Another important type of carbohydrate to consider in a healthy snack is fibre. Fibre is only found in plant-based foods and cannot be digested by the body so it helps with bowel regularity, controls blood sugar levels and keeps you fuller for longer. Good sources of fibre include beans, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

Protein-rich foods provide our bodies with amino acids to support muscle and tissue growth and repair. Good sources of protein can be found from both animal and plant sources. When choosing animal sources, such as cheese or yogurt, try to choose lower fat options. Great sources of plant sources of protein include: beans, lentils, nuts, seeds and nut butter.

Here are five examples of healthy snacks that include a combination of carbohydrates and protein that you can easily incorporate into your daily meal routine:

## 1. Hummus & Veggies

Hummus, which is a dip made from chickpeas, is packed with protein! You can purchase pre-made hummus at the grocery store in a variety of delicious flavours, such as garlic or roasted red pepper. Choose a variety of dark green, orange and red veggies to dip. Some of our favorite veggies to eat with hummus are carrots and green peppers!



## 2. Apple and Nut Butter

Apples are a great source of fibre and Vitamin C. They are readily available any time of the year in grocery stores which makes them a great snack choice. Try slicing your apple and adding peanut butter, or another nut butter of your choice. This will add protein to your snack and will keep you fuller for longer.



### 3. Homemade Trail Mix

You can get creative with this snack by adding your favorite nuts, seeds, and a small amount of dried fruit or dark chocolate. Common trail mixes include: almonds, cashews, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, cheerios, dark chocolate, cranberries, and/or raisins. Trail mix is a great snack option because nuts and seeds are great sources of healthy fats, protein and fibre!



### 4. Greek Yogurt and Fruit

Another delicious snack that you can get creative with! Greek yogurt is a great source of protein, and you can top it with a variety of different fruits like strawberries, banana, or blueberries to sweeten it up. Adding fruit will provide you with important vitamins and minerals along with fibre!



### 5. Crackers and Cheese

Crackers can be a great choice for a complex carbohydrate as long as they are whole grain and high in fibre. A few good choices are Triscuits or Kashi (but don't forget to look at the nutrition label to be sure). Cheese on the other hand is a good source of protein, but remember to look for a lower fat option such as partly skimmed.



Here are a few final tips on healthy snacking:

- If you are buying pre-packaged snacks, look for options that are higher in fibre and protein on the nutrition label.
- Be mindful of the portion size of your snacks. It might be beneficial to pre-portion snacks like trail mix to avoid mindless eating. For example: one serving of trail mix would be about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup.
- Keep snacks on hand and ready to go. If you like raw veggies as a snack, try to cut and prep veggies for an entire week!
- Drink lots of water! Sometimes, we may think we are hungry but we might just be thirsty. It's always a good idea to have a water bottle near you and fill it up several times a day.