

Better Snack Ideas

Snacks with an * are good options for those with diabetes.

- **Chicken or Tuna salad with celery or carrot sticks***
- **Cured meats or cold cuts***
(avoid corn syrups, nitrates/nitrites if possible)
- **Sweet potato or veggie chips** (cooked in coconut or avocado oil, preferably)
- **Sardines*** (wild caught)
- **Trail mixes*** (Trail mixes without dried fruits are good for diabetics. Watch out for soybean/canola oil added to them)
- **Hard boiled eggs***
- **Date balls** (Pureed with coconut oil, dates, and coconut flakes, rolled in shredded coconut oil)
- **Nut butter or coconut butter packs*** (avoid soybean/canola oils and added sweeteners)
- **Avocados*** (avocados do have carbohydrates so monitor BGLs to see if they are appropriate for you)
- **Banana or plantain chips**
- **Dark chocolate** (only a few squares, don't eat the whole bar!)
- **Jerkies*** (watch the ingredients, avoid corn syrup sweetened brands)
- **Macaroons** (Hail Merry's or Jennie's are good choices. As are homemade)
- **Pork skins or chicharrones*** (Epic Bar now has Pork Rinds! With other brands, avoid soybean/canola oils)
- **Toasted coconut flakes*** (add to trail mix to make a grain free granola*)
- **Whole nuts and seeds*** (preferably raw & be sure to chew into paste for better digestion)
- **Egg salad over avocado halves*** (it's really, *really* good!)
- **Smoked salmon*** (wild caught, Alaskan salmon. Avoid Atlantic farmed salmon.)
- **Dried Fruits** (apple chips, mango slices, pineapples, etc. Avoid those with added sweeteners)
- **Cheese sticks or slices***
- **Veggies*** (Celery, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, snap peas, etc.)
- **Protein bars*** (not all are suitable for diabetics. Read the labels)
- **Fresh fruits & berries** (some diabetics may tolerate small amounts of blueberries without raising BGLs)
- **Yogurts*** (Siggi's is a brand that has more protein than carbs which will help with energy maintenance and is better for diabetics. Avoid sweetened yogurts)

There's conflicting opinions on whether or not we need to snack throughout the day. Most USDA sanctioned Dieticians and Nutritionists suggest regular snacking throughout the day to maintain energy and blood sugar levels. But until recently snacking wasn't something we did very often. We ate 3 solid meals a day without much in between and we were just fine. So, where did this idea come from and do we really need to snack? The answer is, not necessarily. Our bodies are designed to adapt to periods of fasting.

When you eat a meal, the nutrients in the food are broken down and are delivered throughout the body to provide fuel and the nutrients necessary to carry out proper metabolic function. Carbohydrates and proteins (to an extent) that are broken down into glucose increase your blood sugar levels and the pancreas responds by producing insulin. Insulin works to shuttle the glucose into the cells to be used for fuel. Excess glucose is converted to fatty acids and stored for later.

During times of fasting, the body uses stored nutrients for fuel. Prolonged fasting burns fat for energy. During this time, the digestive tract is able to rest and repair. Damaged cells are replaced with new cells to keep the gut lining strong and healthy. Unfortunately, continual eating diminishes the amount of time the body spends both burning fat and maintaining or repairing its cells.

Often times a simple balancing of macronutrients can help regulate energy metabolism. If you're eating too many carbohydrates and too few healthy fats or protein, energy levels can drop significantly during prolonged fasting. This happens because of the way glucose is metabolized in the body. It's a fast acting, short term fuel source. Conversely, fats and proteins are slow burning fuels that can provide sustained energy over longer periods of time. By increasing the amount of fat and protein at meals, especially at breakfast, you can help maintain consistent energy levels throughout the day without having to snack. And you can burn some fat!

That being said, many of us have already adopted a habit of snacking or have developed metabolic disruptions that cause dips and spikes in blood glucose levels that make it hard for our body to naturally regulate our energy without snacking. Because of this, I've put together a list of healthier snack options that can help us better fuel our bodies and eventually move away from habitual snacking.