



Fiona Hunter



HOW HEALTHY ARE YOUR SNACKS?

June 2010

Expert nutritionist and dietician, Fiona Hunter, reveals which snacks are healthier

One of the biggest myths about snacking is that it is bad for you. The truth is that it's not the act of snacking itself that is bad for you but the type of snacks that people often choose to snack on can be bad for their health. Many of our favourite snack foods are high in fat, sugar and/or salt and lacking in fibre, vitamins and minerals. But if you choose your snacks wisely most nutritionists agree that eating little and often – three main meals with a couple of small healthy snacks in between - is a much healthier way of eating. Eating regularly can help keep blood sugar levels stable and avoid the energy lows that many of us experience mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Studies have also shown that eating regularly will help reduce the risk of over-eating at meal times and can help with weight control.

So what makes a healthy snack?

You don't need a degree in nutrition to know that some snacks are healthier than others. To be healthy the snacks you choose should contain more than just calories. Snacks should also provide nutrients such as fibre, vitamins and minerals. Ideally, a snack should provide no more than 5% of your Guideline Daily Amount for calories, sugar, fat, or salt and at least 5% of your GDA for fibre. For a woman, this works out at:

- **100 calories**
- **4.5g sugar**
- **3.5g fat**
- **1g sat fat**
- **0.3g salt**
- **1.2g fibre**

So how does your favourite snack stack up?

Kettle Chips/30g		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	143	7
Sugar (g)	0.9	1
Fat (g)	7.5	11
Sat fat (g)	0.8	4
Salt (g)	0.6	10
Fibre (g)	1.35	5.6%

2 Finger Kit Kat		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	107	5
Sugar (g)	13.2	14.6
Fat (g)	5.4	7.7
Sat fat (g)	3	15
Salt (g)	0.1	1.6
Fibre (g)	0.5	2 .../2

Tracker Cereal Bar chocolate chip/26g		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	125	6.25
Sugar (g)	7.9	8.7
Fat (g)	6.1	8.7
Sat fat (g)	2.9	14.5
Salt (g)	0.1	1.6
Fibre (g)	1	4.1

Rice Krispie Squares totally chocolate /36g		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	158	7.9
Sugar (g)	13	14.4
Fat (g)	5	7.1
Sat fat (g)	3.5	17.5
Salt (g)	0.2	3.3
Fibre (g)	0.5	2

Strawberry and Banana Smoothie/200mls		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	106	5.3
Sugar (g)	19.6	21.8
Fat (g)	Trace	Less than 1%
Sat fat (g)	Trace	Less than 1%
Salt (g)	Trace	Less than 1%
Fibre (g)	4.8	20%

Muller Rice Pot strawberry/190g		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	203	10
Sugar (g)	23.7	26
Fat (g)	4.4	6.2
Sat fat (g)	2.5	12.5
Salt (g)	0.47	7.8
Fibre (g)	0.7	3

Hula Hoops/25g		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	129	6.45
Sugar (g)	0.1	0.11
Fat (g)	7.1	10
Sat fat (g)	0.6	3
Salt (g)	0.5	8.3
Fibre (g)	0.5	2

nairn's Stem Ginger Oat Biscuits/2 biscuits		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	86	4.3
Sugar (g)	3.8	4.2
Fat (g)	3	4.3
Sat fat (g)	1.2	6
Salt (g)	0.08	1.3
Fibre (g)	1.2	5 .../3

nairn's Fine Milled Oatcakes/2 biscuits		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	70	3.5
Sugar (g)	Trace	Less than 1
Fat (g)	3.4	4.8
Sat fat (g)	1.4	7
Salt (g)	0.2	3.3
Fibre (g)	1.4	5.8

nairn's sweet chilli oatbakes/30g		% Guideline Daily Amount
Energy (Kcals)	128	6.4
Sugar (g)	1.7	1.8
Fat (g)	4	5.7
Sat fat (g)	0.4	2
Salt (g)	0.2	3.3
Fibre (g)	2.2	9

7 Step Plan to Healthy Snacking

- Don't fall victim to the snack attack. Plan snacks at regular intervals throughout the day – mid-morning and mid-afternoon. If you allow yourself to get over hungry you're more likely to end up grabbing an unhealthy snack or over-eating at your next meal.
- Plan ahead and make sure your fridge and cupboards are stocked with plenty of healthy snacks.
- Don't use snacks as a substitute for proper meals. Plan regular snacks at set times rather than constantly grazing throughout the day.
- Variety is one of the key ingredients in a healthy well balanced diet – try to vary the snacks you choose.
- Choosing snacks with a low Glycaemic Index (GI) will help avoid surges in blood sugar levels.
- **Watch your portions** - Pre-portioned snacks can also help you keep track of what you are eating and they also fit nicely in handbags and backpacks when you're out and about.
- **Think before you drink** - It's easy to forget that drinks such as fizzy drinks, fruit drinks and milky coffees contain calories.

Snack Facts

According to a 2008 survey for Britain's Federation of Bakers, crisps (51%), biscuits (44%), chocolates or sweets (40%) and fizzy drinks (24%) are the favoured after-school snacks of the nation's 4-11 year-olds, and one in four British parents finds it difficult to persuade their children to snack on anything a nutritionist might consider remotely healthy.

The UK is by far the largest consumer of savoury snacks. In 2004 over 430,000 tonnes were sold in the UK, with a retail value of €4bn. (Source: European Snack Association)

In the UK adults eat around 5.5kg savoury snacks per person per year. (Source: European Snack Association)

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