

MHealthy Nutrition:

# MANAGING SNACK ATTACKS



Most of us have urges to snack when we are not actually hungry. Becoming overwhelmed by urges to snack, or by cravings for certain foods, can interfere with our efforts to maintain good health and weight. Here are some strategies that can help.

- **Urges to snack tend to increase when we let ourselves become too hungry.** Avoid skipping meals or starving yourself. Include snacks and foods you enjoy in your meal plan.
- **Minimize hunger between meals and snacks** by including sources of lean protein, healthy fats, and high fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- **Become aware of the environmental cues** that trigger your thoughts about eating. Make what you are trying to limit less available and less visible, and what you want to eat more available and more inviting.
- **Listen in on your self-talk.** It is easy to become locked in a battle between our “wants” and our “shoulds.” Accept that you will have cravings and urges to snack. Practice pausing to give yourself a break from negative or frustrating thoughts. Refocus your attention on what is going on around you, what you are feeling and thinking, and the best ways to meet your needs.
- **Plan and practice pleasant activities** to Distance, Delay, and Distract from unwanted urges: leave the kitchen, take a walk, call a friend, pick up your knitting, or perhaps, take a shower or a bath. Delaying and refocusing your attention, even for a few minutes, can lessen your urge to snack and build new coping strategies.
- **Experiment with what it takes to satisfy your cravings:** try something a little less sweet, a little less often, or perhaps, something more planned. Try fruit instead of candy. Keep learning what works best for you. You may find that some foods are too inviting for you to have around; however, “forbidding” a favorite food can backfire, by magnifying its importance.
- **Ask for support from friends, co-workers, and family members.** Be specific, helping them to understand what is and isn’t useful. Small changes, and a bit of encouragement, can be very helpful.
- **Slow Down,** take time to fully enjoy and really experience that favorite snack. Learn to be mindful of the taste, texture, temperature, and aroma. Practice lingering on your first bite.

## HEALTHIER “SWEET” SNACKS

- Chocolate milk
- Chocolate or vanilla soy milk
- Coffee, regular or gourmet flavored
- Fruit, fresh, frozen or canned
- Sugar-free hot chocolate
- Herbal hot tea
- Fruit-infused water
- Fruit smoothie
- Sugar-free Jell-O
- Lightly sweetened cereal (Honey Nut Cheerios, flavored Shredded Mini Wheats)
- Sugar-free pudding
- Sweet and salty granola bar
- Yogurt
- 100% frozen fruit bar