8TH GRADE | SESSION 3 INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Choosing Healthy Snacks

Soon you'll be starting high school. It's an exciting time. Things are not the same as they used to be. You have more independence, but also more responsibilities at school and home. You also make more decisions on your own about what and when to eat. You get to listen to your body and explore your taste preferences. You probably already know what foods and beverages are your favorites.

Vocabulary words are in **bold** and **underlined**
See definitions on p. 4

By now, you probably choose the types of foods you eat and the drinks you have between meals.[1] These seemingly simple choices can make a big difference in how you feel and your health. Think about the kinds of foods you snack on. Do you choose lots of sweet or salty **snacks**? Or do you reach for healthier options like whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables?

Changing Snack Patterns

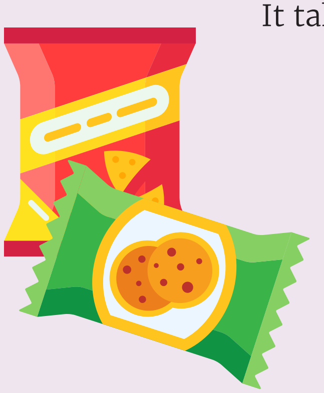
Kids today are snacking a lot more than they did in the 1970s. The amount of daily **calories** children consume from snacks has increased by almost 200 calories since then.[2] You would have to walk for about 1 hour and 20 minutes to burn off this many calories.[3]

It's important to choose snacks that will provide your body with the nutrients to move and be healthy, without too many extra calories from **added sugars** and **saturated fat**.

In the late 1970s, American children consumed an average of only one snack a day. Today, they snack about three times a day.[2]

How long will it take you to use up extra calories?

It takes about 1 hour and 20 minutes to burn off 200 extra calories.*



200 EXTRA CALORIES = 1 HOUR 20 MIN

OF WALKING TO BURN OFF EXTRA CALORIES

*Estimates are based on average weights of children ages 12–14. Those who weigh more than average will burn more calories. Those who weigh less than average will burn fewer calories. Calculations are based on the walking speed of 3 miles per hour.

[1] U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020, December). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025*. 9th Edition. https://dietaryguidelines.gov.

[2] Piernas, C., & Popkin, B. M. (2010). Trends in snacking among U.S. children. *Health affairs (Project Hope)*, 29(3), 398–404. https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2009.0666.

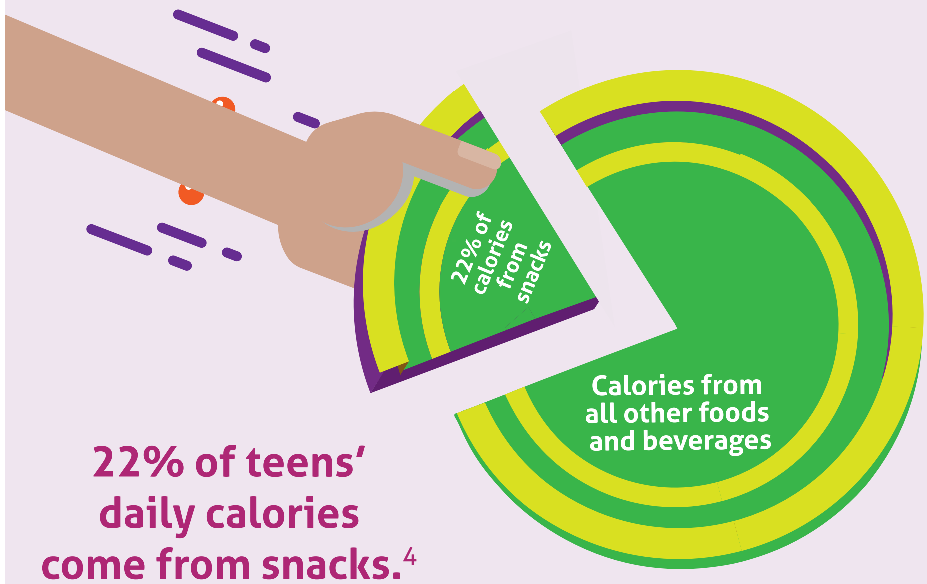
[3] Wang, Y.C., Hsiao, A., Orleans, C.T., Gortmaker, S.L. (2013). The caloric calculator: Average caloric impact of childhood obesity interventions. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 45(2), e3–e113. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2013.03.012.

The Impact of Our Snacking Choices

Our snack choices matter and can help us establish a healthy eating pattern for life. A healthy eating pattern limits saturated fat, added sugars, **refined grains**, and **sodium**, which are often found in snack foods that many middle school students choose. Eating too many unhealthy snacks with saturated fat, added sugars, refined grains, and sodium can have consequences. Choosing healthier snacks can help you create an eating pattern that is associated with positive health outcomes including reduced risk of obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure (hypertension), and some cancers.

Teens ♥ Snacks

Snacks may seem small and insignificant because they are not main meals. However, your snack choices really add up:



22% of teens' daily calories come from snacks.[4]

Snack Choices Add Up

Make sure you pay attention to what snacks you're choosing. The extra calories, added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium can add up through the day.

Comparing Snack Choices

SNACK A

	calories	added sugars (grams)	saturated fat (grams)	sodium (milligrams)
1 bag of potato chips (1 ounce)	152	0 g	1 g	126 mg
1 package of cookies (1 ounce)	397	25 g	6 g	249 mg
TOTAL:	**549**	**25 g**	**7 g**	**375 mg**

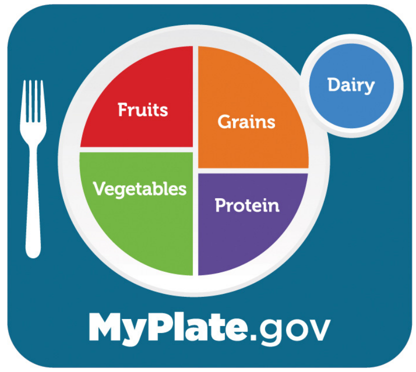
SNACK B

	calories	added sugars (grams)	saturated fat (grams)	sodium (milligrams)
1/2 cup carrot sticks with 2 tbsp hummus	25	0 g	0 g	115 mg
1 medium banana	53	0 g	0 g	1 mg
TOTAL:	**78**	**0 g**	**0 g**	**116 mg**

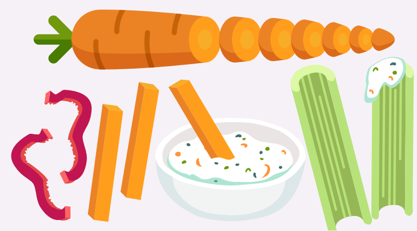
[4] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. (2020). Snacks: Percentages of Selected Nutrients Contributed by Food and Beverages Consumed at Snack Occasions, by Gender and Age, *What We Eat in America*, NHANES 2017–2018. https://www.ars.usda.gov/ARSUserFiles/80400530/pdf/1718/Table_25_SNK_GEN_17.pdf.

Five Ways to Snack Healthy

You can use MyPlate (see https://www.myplate.gov) as a guide to help you choose snacks that are part of a healthy eating pattern. MyPlate illustrates the five food groups (Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein Foods, and Dairy) that are the building blocks for a healthy eating pattern using a familiar image—a place setting for a meal. Here are some tips for choosing snacks that are part of a healthy eating pattern.

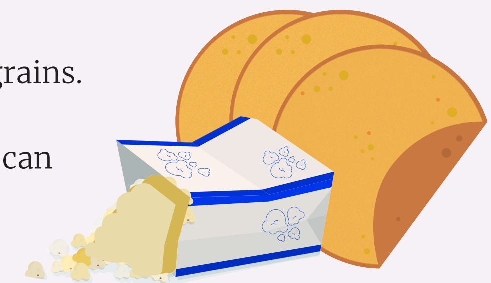


1 **Plan ahead.** Make a plan so healthier snack choices are quick and easy. You can save time by slicing up vegetables so they're ready when hunger strikes. Store sliced vegetables in the refrigerator to eat with healthier dips like hummus or low-calorie dressing.



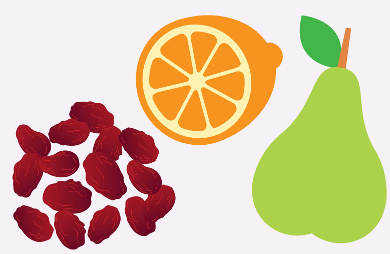
2 **Drink smart.** Grab a cup of low-fat (1 percent) or fat-free milk or calcium-fortified soymilk. Milk is high in calcium which helps keep your bones and teeth strong. Or try seltzer water with a splash of 100 percent fruit juice instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.

3 **Go for great whole grains.** Steer clear of snacks with refined grains. Instead, choose unsalted popcorn, whole-wheat crackers, or whole-grain tortillas. These snacks are higher in fiber, which can help you feel fuller longer than refined grain foods.



4 **Nibble on lean protein.** Choose lean protein foods such as hummus, a hard-boiled egg, beans, or unsalted nuts to fuel your day. Try dipping apple slices in peanut butter, or carrot sticks in bean dip. A little protein with your snack can help you feel fuller longer.

5 **Consider convenience.** Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruits can be easy "grab-and-go" options that need little preparation. Enjoy a pear, grab a handful of dried cranberries, or peel an orange to satisfy your cravings.

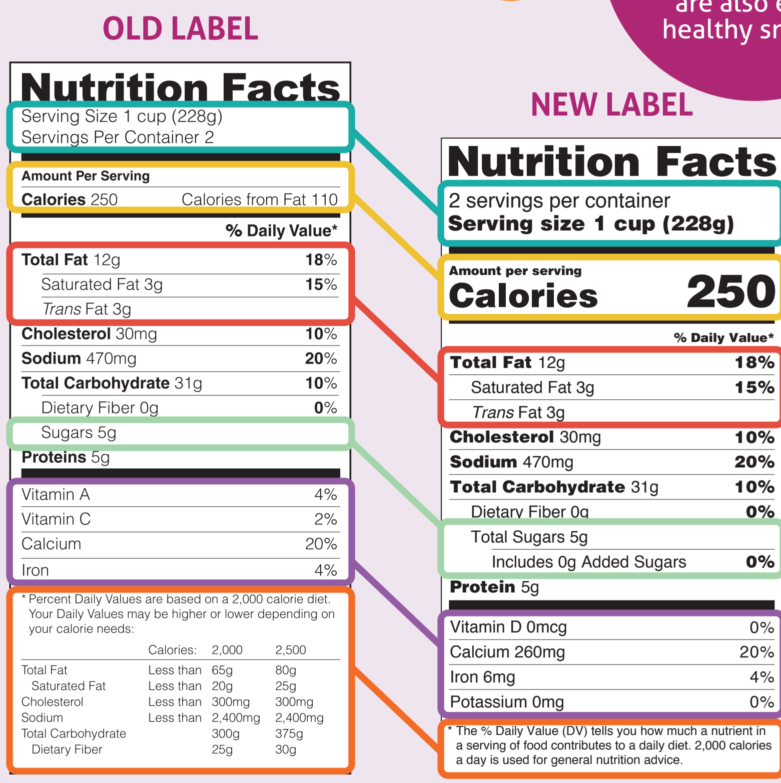


REMEMBER: Whole, unprocessed foods—like fruits and vegetables—are often not labeled, but they are also easy healthy snacks.

Comparing Snack Options

Food labels tell you the nutritional content of a food. You may already use the Nutrition Facts label in some way—maybe to check calories. But, the more familiar you are with the information, the more you'll want to use it daily to ensure the choices you make are healthy and balanced.

The Food and Drug Administration has presented a new Nutrition Facts label that is now used on packaged foods and beverages nationwide. This new label makes it easier to identify Calories, Serving Size, Saturated Fat, Sodium, Added Sugars, and Nutrients. Look to the right to see how to read both the old and new labels.



Conclusion

Snacks are a big part of your day, so plan them wisely! You can feel good, grow, and stay healthy by using MyPlate as a guide to choosing your snacks.

VOCABULARY

Added Sugars: Sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed by food companies or prepared by you.

Calorie: A unit used to measure the energy the body receives from foods and beverages. Calories are also used to measure the energy used by the body.

Portion Size: A "serving" is the amount of food recommended in consumer education materials such as MyPlate. A "portion" is the amount of a food you choose to eat at any one time—which may be more or less than a serving.

Refined Grains: Grains made of only the endosperm part of the grain kernel. Milling has removed the bran and germ part of the kernel, as well as some nutrients. Examples of refined grains include white flour, white bread, and white rice.

Saturated Fat: Fat that is usually solid at room temperature. The amount of saturated fat in a food is shown on the Nutrition Facts label, which is located on the food package. Eating too much saturated fat may raise blood cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease.

Snack: A small amount of food eaten between meals.

Sodium: A mineral generally consumed in the form of salt (sodium chloride) that your body needs in small amounts to work properly. However, when consumed in excessive amounts, sodium may raise the risk of high blood pressure (hypertension).

8TH GRADE | STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Choosing Healthy Snacks

Follow the directions to answer the questions below.

IF YOU ARE USING ACROBAT X OR PRO:

1. Open the form
2. Fill the form out
3. Go to File, Save As, choose where you would like to save the file, and then press Save

IF YOU WANT TO SAVE IN ADOBE READER:

1. Select File, Save As, Reader Extended, Enable Additional Features
2. This will allow users with the free Reader to save form data in an existing fillable PDF form
3. Click Save Now
4. Go to File, Save As, choose where you would like to save the file, and then press Save

1. Why are your snack choices an important decision for you to consider? Cite evidence from the article to support your answer.

2. How have snack habits changed since the 1970s and why do you think Americans snack differently?

3. How can snacks be helpful and/or harmful to your eating pattern and health?

4. Of the Five Ways to Snack Healthy listed on p. 3, which one is the "best fit" for your daily life? Why?

5. Of the Five Ways to Snack Healthy listed on p. 3, which one is the **hardest** for you to do? Why?

6. Look at the Nutrition Facts labels for these two snacks. Use these labels to complete the chart below.

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container
Serving size 1 cookie

Amount per serving **Calories**	**108**
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 6g	**5%**
Saturated Fat 3g	**13%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 62mg	**3%**
Total Carbohydrate 13g	**10%**
Dietary Fiber 0g	**0%**
Total Sugars 9g	
Includes 8g Added Sugars	**17%**
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 9mg	1%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 42mg	1%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

WHOLE WHEAT CRACKERS (LOW SODIUM)

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container
Serving size 4 crackers

Amount per serving **Calories**	**71**
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3g	**0%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**2%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 30mg	**1%**
Total Carbohydrate 11g	**8%**
Dietary Fiber 2g	**7%**
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	**0%**
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 9mg	1%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 42mg	1%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

	Chocolate Chip Cookies	Whole Wheat Crackers
Sodium (mg)		
Added Sugars (g)		
Saturated Fat (g)		
Calories		

Based on the information provided above, circle the healthier snack.