



8 Healthy Snacks for Diabetics to Try Today

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Healthy Snacks for Diabetics

One of the things it can be hard to get used to after a diabetes diagnosis is the sanctioned order to snack. People often cut right back on treats throughout the day, but it is thought to be preferable for those with diabetes to eat small snacks often.

Now before you get too excited, this is not Carte Blanche to munch on family sized packs of chips or large candy bars in between meals. Think more about the small and healthy snacks you might offer a toddler.

I'll offer some specific ideas later on. Meanwhile, let's look at why it's important for those with diabetes to build snacks into their daily routine.

The Importance of Snacking for Diabetics

Leaving it too long between meals or eating big meals with gaps of time in between can play havoc with blood glucose, sending your sugars on a veritable roller-coaster of highs and lows.

This can leave you feeling off-color, can do long-term damage to nerves and organs, and can potentially cause a life-threatening situation depending on your type of diabetes and medication.

Even if normally your blood sugars stay relatively stable, a change in routine like extreme heat or cold, stress, a time zone change or illness can cause unexpected downturns in blood glucose levels, so it's useful to have some snack in hand just in case.

City dwellers will know too that traffic snarl-ups can be both unexpected and lengthy and we all know how unpredictable public transportation can be. I've been caught out a few times stuck on a Subway train waiting for signals to change in a hot tunnel and starting to feel a little dazed have been saved from collapsing by my usually somewhat battered emergency cereal bar.

Meeting going on much longer than expected? I'm confident everyone in the room would rather you pull out a small snack than deal with a medical emergency.

So snack we must. But what sorts of things are good for keeping blood sugars stable?

You are aiming for snacks of about 100 to 200 calories and/or 15 to 30 grams of carbohydrates, depending on what plan your nutritionist or doctor has advised. Here are some suggestions for some more exciting, healthy and tasty snacks to suit both sweet and savory tastes.

8 Diabetic-Friendly Snacks Worth Trying

With a simple online search of "healthy diabetic snacks" to looking through a magazine at the grocery store, you can find inspiration anywhere for diabetic-friendly snacks. Below, you can find a list of healthy snacks you can add to your snack list.

Toasted Teacake With Banana and Maple Syrup

The Diabetes UK website has some fabulous ideas aimed at teenagers, but equally good for all ages. They suggest you try a toasted teacake topped with sliced banana and drizzled with just a touch of maple syrup, or pop your own corn and flavor with parmesan.

Sweet and Salty Popcorn

The current craze for "sweet and salty" popcorn is handy too. The pre-packed bags are usually low calorie and low fat, or you could try making your own for a cheap treat on movie night or to bag up in portions for smaller snacks.

Just make one batch of popcorn, and divide it into two bowls. Flavor one batch with a sprinkle of sugar or powdered sweetener and the other with just a pinch of salt then blend.

Also, another popcorn recipe from the Food Network suggests adding the grated zest of a lemon and cayenne pepper to home-popped popcorn to create tasty and diabetic-friendly spicy citrus popcorn. You could make it in advance and carry it in your bag for when hunger strikes.

Hummus/Tzatziki With Vegetables

How about hummus with veggies? This snack is calorie dense but packed with great nutrients. Everydayhealth.com suggests one-third of a cup with lots of crunchy veggies. If you don't like hummus, try tzatziki instead!

If you are trying to avoid dairy-based carbs, try making my favorite mint and lemon dairy-free dip which my friends demand I bring along to every meetup!

I use a 500g pot of soy-based yogurt substitute and add either 1tbs of prepared mint sauce or a good handful of fresh mint, washed and finely chopped. Add the juice of half a lemon or the equivalent of bottled lemon juice and powdered sweetener to taste. Serve with plain tortilla chips or carrot sticks, scallions or celery.

Cheese Quesadillas

This quick snack from the American Diabetes Association is perfect for cheese lovers. Make a cheese quesadilla with one six-inch corn or whole wheat tortilla with one ounce of shredded cheese and a quarter cup of salsa.

Next page: Five more healthy snacks for diabetics, and how to find diabetic-friendly snacks.

Healthy Snacks for Diabetics

Cream Cheese With Crackers

This one is a quick and nutritious food fix to keep hunger pangs at bay. Spread one tablespoon of light cream cheese over two graham cracker squares and top with a quarter cup of halved grapes. Diabetic Living Online also points out that grapes are an excellent source of potassium.

Dark Chocolate With Banana

For those with a sweet tooth, the same website above suggests melting just half an ounce of dark chocolate,

chopping up half a banana, and dipping the slices into the chocolate. If you are worried about wasting the other half of that banana (and let's face it, they don't keep very well once peeled) slice it, bag it and freeze it!

Frozen banana makes a refreshing snack straight out of the freezer. Frozen grapes are also gorgeous but don't keep nice for very long once they are out of the freezer so just take out three or four for a refreshing snack at home.

Trail Mix and Nuts

Do you love trail mix? Why not create your own personalized mix or try this great blend suggested by online resource dlife, which includes roasted almonds, shredded unsweetened coconut, sunflower seeds, and even a few mini chocolate chips.

It's much better to make your own mix which can be bagged in sealed bags for when you fancy it, rather than rely on store-bought varieties which often include lots of dried fruit which bumps up the carb and calorie count.

Nuts, in general, make good, easily transportable snacks. You can stock up with family sized bags and divide into portions. Be aware that nuts can be high in calories, especially if you choose the oiled and salted varieties.

For instance, just 16 peanuts cooked in oil and salted adds up to just under 100 calories so don't be tempted to grab handfuls and hurl them in your mouth willy-nilly. In comparison, you get 77 dried pine-nuts, 13 walnuts or 29 pistachios, with or without salt for your 100 calories.

Like popcorn, you can flavor nuts. Try buying raw nuts then marinade with a little olive oil and cayenne pepper or cinnamon, chili or coconut flakes, then toast on a lined tray at around 170c/335F for 10-15 minutes. Almonds and walnuts work particularly well for this kind of recipe.

Smoothies With Vegetables With Fruit

Another healthy way of snacking is to build a smoothie. Not one of the sugar-laden bottled smoothie-type drinks but a real smoothie packed with veggies and fruit.

You do have to be careful with quantities, so you are probably best avoiding the large option from your local mall-based smoothie chain and anything loaded with milk, full-fat sweetened yogurt or ice cream.

It's safest to make your own and keep portion sizes small. A little smoothie goes a long way, and you'll find even a small cup will fill you up and keep sugars stable as long as you avoid high sugar ingredients and don't be tempted to add sugar.

This website, The Diabetes Council suggests 8 of the best smoothies for people with diabetes. The author suggests some yummy ingredients including cucumber, melon and mint, peanut butter and berries and green tea and cocoa.

Some of them like the delicious sounding pumpkin pie smoothie are not suitable as snacks, but the website is quite clear on the calorie and carb counts and other vital nutritional information for each suggested recipe.

How to Find Healthy Diabetic Snack Ideas

Check out Pinterest for some more great ideas. You could start your own Pinterest healthy snacks board to collect recipes and swap ideas with other food lovers.

Try searching Pinterest for "snacks for diabetics," and you will see lots of options pop up ranging from sugar-free snack ideas, low carb ideas and snacks for on the go.

In just a few minutes online I found a great simple recipe for a diabetes-friendly low carb, gluten-free, dairy-free,

sugar-free brownies made with coconut or almond flour which could be made then cut into bite-sized snack portions. I also found “guilt-free” diabetic banana bread and no bake gluten free chocolate crunch bars. Coffee break at the office would be so much more exciting with one of these to look forward to!

Check the quantities, calories, and carbs in recipes before indulging, though. Not everyone on the internet is an expert in diabetic nutrition.

The Takeaway

As you can see the internet is an amazing resource for finding great recipes for snacks and other recipes suitable for a diabetes-friendly diet. Why not find some you enjoy and make batches in advance.

If you have a healthy snack in your glovebox, bag or desk drawer, you will be much less likely to reach for a donut or candy bar when hunger strikes.

Looking for more great diabetic-friendly recipes? Check out our best diabetic pizza you'll ever have, easy-to-make sugar-free peanut butter and almond cups, and the glucose-regulating roasted broccoli and barley salad.