

# SNACK SMART: AVOID HIDDEN CALORIES

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Nothing satisfies a mid-afternoon slump like a good healthy snack. Snacks can be a between-meal pick-me-up with many nutritional advantages. Snacking helps your metabolism stay well-tuned, keeps you from sabotaging a well-meaning diet and prevents ravenous overeating at mealtimes. It keeps blood sugar level so you aren't irritable and helps you focused. Kids get much of their nutrition throughout the day from snacks and most diets make provisions for snacking.

But seemingly healthful snacks can pack a caloric punch without your knowledge. Let's test your snack smarts and see if you can pick out the healthy poser.

1. It's 4:00 and you're stuck at work with the poorly-stocked kitchen. Which snack has fewer calories, trail mix or cookies?

Answer: Cookies

Commercially prepared trail mix can be loaded with salted peanuts, milk chocolate morsels and sugarcoated dried fruit that can make a 1/2 cup cost you 320 calories. Whereas one raisin cookie weighs in at 250 calories. The solution? Make your own trail mix: include true tree nuts like raw almonds and walnuts for protein, fiber and omega-3 fatty acids; and dried cranberries and dark chocolate for antioxidants.

2. Your friend has just been dumped by their significant other, and you decide to get their mind off things with a movie. Which snack has fewer calories, popcorn or tortilla chips.

Answer: Tortilla chips

While popcorn is a healthy snack, it isn't when it is doused in buttery chemicals and served in huge quantities. A small bucket of buttered movie or stadium popcorn delivers more than a 400 calories! So a serving of popcorn is 200 calories vs, at 140 calories for the tortilla chips . The solution? Bring your own air-popped popcorn and season it yourself.

3. You have just hit the sale of the century at the mall and want to celebrate the savings. Which snack has fewer calories, a yogurt parfait or a smoothie?

Answer: Smoothie

In order to turn yogurt into a parfait it needs to be layered with other ingredients typically high-fat granola, sweetened fruit and other sugary flavorings bringing it to 350 calories vs. 150-calorie smoothie. The solution? Use zero or low-fat Greek yogurt, which is a good source of probiotics, layer it with a few berries and top it off with some honey or agave syrup.

Whether you are dieting to lose weight or just to want to keep fueled throughout the day, snacking should be a part of a healthy eating plan. Here are some tips for healthy on-the-go snacking.

- Plan Ahead: Count on eating 2-3 healthy snacks a day and plan what they will be in advance. You'll eat less if it is organized, but be careful to not buy too much snack food each week. You are likely to barrel through it just because it's there.
- Make your Own: Keep your pantry stocked with ingredients for making your own snacks. As a general rule, choose snacks high in fiber and protein with no added sugars: nuts and seeds, whole-grain crackers, peanut butter, fruit slices, hard-boiled eggs and low-fat soups. Try to keep each snack between 150 to 200 calories.
- Snack Defensively: Eating snacks at pre-planned times - mid morning, mid-afternoon and evening. This strategy might help stave off the fast-food drive-by or mindless high-calorie grab typical of a hungry snacker.

<http://www.doctoroz.com/videos/snack-smart-avoid-hidden-calories>