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Healthy Snacks for Weight Loss - Curb Those Midnight Munchies

If you're trying to improve your health, chances are you're looking for healthy snacks for weight loss. The good news is that there are plenty of healthy ways to satisfy those munchies. The bad news is that most of us eat far too many snacks, particularly in the evening. Did you know that many of us consume as much as one third of our daily calorie intake AFTER our evening meal?

Oh, it all starts innocently enough, you're watching television or at the computer and a snack attack hits. You grab a packet of potato crisps or a block of chocolate and start munching and before you know it the packet is empty. We don't even realize sometimes just how much we are eating. But why do we do it? Well, there are several reasons, some people engage in emotional eating, others just have a routine that includes evening snacks like dessert after dinner or cakes and cookies for supper, still others are craving foods which contain nutrients that their regular diet doesn't provide enough of.

So here are some anti snacking tips and ideas for healthy snacks for weight loss.

1. Drink a glass of water: Thirst is commonly misinterpreted as hunger and having a glass of water can satisfy that empty feeling.
2. Eat smaller, more frequent meals: Instead of three meals per day, eat 5-6 smaller meals. Two or three of those should be snacks and the traditional main meals should be smaller than usual. This makes your metabolism burn at a higher rate because it's constantly trying to digest food and helps avoid hunger pains.
3. Don't skip breakfast: Many people make the mistake of skipping breakfast to decrease their calorie intake. Unfortunately, this is counter productive because two hours later they are starving and tend to overeat, thereby actually increasing calorie intake. Better to consume 150 calories for breakfast followed by 50 calories for morning tea than to skip breakfast only to eat 400-500 calories at morning tea time.
4. Make a rule that food can only be eaten at the dining room table and stick to it: This will stop unconscious snacking at the computer or in front of the tv and create a greater awareness of what is being consumed (i.e. calorie content).
5. Read nutritional labels or keep a food diary: When you review the calorie and or fat content of the snacks you eat it may well curb your appetite. Don't forget to take beverages into account. For example, a can of soda can contain as much as 160 calories. Drink four per day and you've added 640 calories to your intake (almost one third of the average requirement)... none of which have satisfied your appetite!
6. Don't store tempting foods in the house: If you just can't say 'NO' to ice cream or chocolates, don't keep them in the freezer/pantry. If they're not there you are less likely to eat them because you probably couldn't be bothered going out to buy them every time you wanted them.
7. Don't ban snacking altogether: Banning snacking altogether will only result in cravings and binge snacking so allow yourself some snacks. Eat less during the day to allow for a healthy snack in the evening.
8. Exercise portion control: Instead of buying a large bag or box of snacks, buy a multi pack and limit yourself to one of the small packs. If your snack of choice doesn't come in multi packs then create your own by portioning small amounts in zip lock bags.
9. Find low calorie substitutes for your favorite foods: If you like ice cream buy the low fat version, if you like chocolate, buy dark chocolate, it's richer, lower in calories and you won't eat as much, buy low fat cheese, oven baked crisps etc.
10. Eat healthy snacks: Instead of eating high calorie snacks like cakes, cookies, candy and crisps, eat fruit or celery and carrot sticks dipped in low fat yoghurt, hummus, tzatziki or cheese dip.
11. Reduce intake of simple carbohydrates: Sugar, products made with white flour (including pasta), potato and white rice. Eat fiber rich versions including legumes, beans, wholemeal/multi grain bread, wholemeal pasta and brown rice during the day as fiber takes longer to digest and creates a feeling of satiation.
12. Chew sugarless gum: If you find yourself craving sweet foods, try chewing sugarless gum, it will satisfy the craving and chewing also sets off a substance called appestat which controls appetite by telling the brain we're full.
13. Brush your teeth: Brushing teeth can cause reluctance to continue eating because it will make our teeth dirty again. Nothing sends the signal that we have finished eating more than brushing our teeth.

Now all you need to do is try these tips till you find the ones that curb your midnight munchies.

This post, entitled "Healthy Snacks for Weight Loss - Curb Those Midnight Munchies" is not intended as professional medical advice.

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