

# Snacking to Meet Nutrition Needs

Current data suggests fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy are under-consumed by 85% of US adults.<sup>1</sup> This guide provides practical tips for how snacks can provide a convenient & healthy way to meet these diet needs.

## WHAT IS A SNACK?

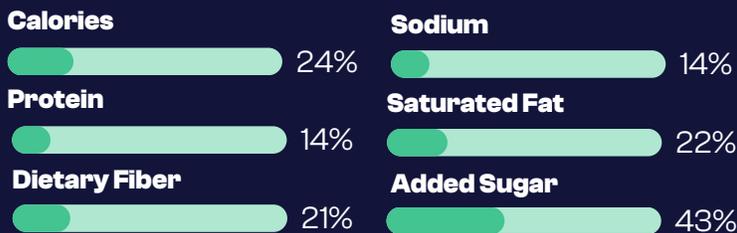
Any eating occasion not identified as breakfast, lunch, dinner/supper or brunch.<sup>2</sup>

## WHY ARE SNACKS IMPORTANT?

Adults consume an average of 3 snacks per day, with 78% of Americans snacking two or more times a day.<sup>3,4</sup> This means snacking can be a significant opportunity to positively impact diet & meet nutrient & food group recommendations.

How much of Americans' daily intake of nutrients and/or food groups come from snacks?<sup>1,3</sup>

### Nutrients



### Food Groups



**Application tip:** Choose snacks with protein and dietary fiber (while being mindful of high added sugar & saturated fat) to maximize their diet contribution

**Application tip:** While fresh fruit can help provide more dietary fiber, focusing on getting dietary fiber from whole grain and vegetable snack options (less common snack options) can maximize your snack contribution to better meet both food group and nutrient recommendations.

## Current Top snack foods in the US<sup>1</sup>

### Fresh fruit

Bananas, apples, oranges, and grapes



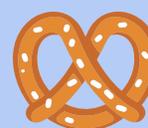
### Sweet snacks

Chocolate chip cookies, ice cream, candy



### Salty snacks

Pretzels



### Dairy

Cheese



## Potential Alternatives to meet health & convenience needs

### Vegetables

fresh with dips like hummus, snacks made with vegetables



fresh vegetables consumed least frequently as snacks

### Processed fruit

(with no added sugar) dried, bars, canned, juice, etc.



sweet & convenient alternative with positive nutrition

### Whole grain snacks

whole grain chips / crackers, oat bars / granola, etc.



fiber & whole grains commonly under-consumed

### Nuts & seeds

raw, bars, in other snacks



convenient protein alternative

## Health Importance

High vegetable intake is linked to improved digestive health and reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, & some cancers.<sup>5</sup>

Fruit is an important source of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, fiber, and potassium.<sup>5</sup>

Whole grains can be a significant, cost-effective source of B vitamins, minerals, and fiber.<sup>6</sup>

Eating nuts as part of a diet low in saturated fat may help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.<sup>7</sup>

### References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2017-2018 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Data. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).
- U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. (9th ed.) December 2020. www.dietaryguidelines.gov
- Sebastian RS, Hoy K, Goldman JD, Moshfegh AJ. Snack Consumption by U.S. Adults - What We Eat in America, NHANES 2017-March 2020. USDA Food Surveys Research Group - Dietary Data Brief No. 53. April 2024.
- International Food Information Council (IFIC). 2024 Food & Health Survey. Published June 20, 2024.
- Slavin JL, Lloyd B. Health benefits of fruits and vegetables. Adv Nutr. 2012;3(4):506-516. Published 2012 Jul 1. doi:10.3945/an.112.002154
- Brauchla M, Fulgoni VL. Cost-effective options for increasing consumption of under-consumed food groups and nutrients in the USA. Public Health Nutr. 2022;25(3):710-716. doi:10.1017/S1368899021000537
- Ros E. Health benefits of nut consumption. Nutrients. 2010;2(7):652-682. doi:10.3390/nu2070652.