

Ten Smart Snacks for Teens

by the [National Diabetes Education Program](#)

A common misconception is that snacking isn't a healthy habit for growing teens. The truth is that most teens need snacks – the trick is making healthy food choices in the right amounts. Eating too many calories can cause teens to become overweight, which puts them at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes, a disease that's now being diagnosed in teens.



Teens can lower their risk for type 2 diabetes if they stay at a healthy weight by being physically active and choosing the right amounts of healthy foods – including snacks. When your teen is making snacks, encourage him or her to use a small plate or bowl and to snack at the table instead of in front of the TV or computer. These habits help teens control portion size and take their time while eating so they don't eat too much. Be active as a family by going walks together and encourage your teen to join active youth recreation programs.

Smart Snack Suggestions*

1. Make a fruit pizza by spreading 2 tablespoons of nonfat cream cheese on a toasted English muffin. Top with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sliced strawberries, handful of grapes, or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of any fruit canned in its own juice. Or top with broccoli, carrots, and tomatoes for a veggie twist.
2. Eat a small bag or handful of baked chips, pretzels, or single-serving bag of air-popped popcorn.
3. Create a homemade fruit smoothie by combining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen vanilla yogurt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup 100 percent orange juice, and one peeled orange in a blender.
4. Have two rice cakes, six whole-grain crackers, or one slice of whole-grain bread served with low-fat cheese, fruit spread, hummus, or peanut butter.
5. Opt for an individual serving size of sugar-free, nonfat pudding instead of regular ice cream.
6. Choose a small tortilla with one or two slices of low-fat cheese or turkey, or a small bowl of vegetable soup and a few crackers.
7. Snack on 1 cup of whole-grain cereal with nonfat or low-fat milk and add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of blueberries, strawberries, or peaches.
8. Spread 1 tablespoon of peanut butter on a tortilla and then sprinkle 1 tablespoon of whole-grain cereal on top. Peel and place one banana on the tortilla and then roll the tortilla for a crunchy treat.
9. Try an apple, banana, or plum with one or two reduced-fat or low-fat string cheese sticks.
10. Combine $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of almonds and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of dried cranberries, cherries, or raisins with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of whole-grain cereal for a fun trail mix.

To learn more, get your free copy of the National Diabetes Education Program's [Tips for Teens: Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes](#) tip sheet by visiting www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or calling 1-888-693-NDEP (6337), TTY: 1-866-569-1162.

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* Some snacks were adapted from Fruits & Veggies — More Matters™. For more recipes, visit www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov. The amount of food teens need to eat each day varies with age, sex, height, and activity level. For more information, visit www.mypyramid.gov.