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HOW TO SNACK BETTER COMBAT HUNGER BETWEEN MEALS

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Americans are changing the way they eat. Snacking is part of our daily lifestyles, making up half of all eating occasions, according to a 2014 report from The Hartman Group. With snacking on the rise, healthy eating is often a challenge. However, when done in moderation with nutritious options, grazing can help you maintain energy throughout the day and ensure your body gets the calories and nutrients it needs. To nosh the sensible way, follow these simple tips.

Plan ahead

When it comes to eating a well-rounded diet, preparation is the first step toward success. Prior planning ensures decent choices are at your fingertips and helps you avoid the temptation of purchasing junk food. Before taking a trip to the local market, create a list packed with fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Once finalized, stick to it!

Mix it up

Now, more than ever, we are incorporating smoothies into our diets. The latest Vitamix research shows Americans consumed a whopping 7.4 billion smoothies last year alone—and that trend is growing. Perfect for taking on the go, smoothies are easy to make and packed with nutrients. These satiating snacks allow us to consume healthy selections, such as citrus fruits, berries, leafy greens, almonds, chia seeds and flaxseed—all in one delicious drink. Blend your way to better snacking by mixing your favorite smoothie ingredients in a Vitamix 7500, which can process even the toughest whole foods. When the 10 a.m. or 3 p.m. craving hits, indulge in your healthful smoothie.

Go nuts

How you fuel your body can make a difference in how you feel. Foods such as nuts and seeds are high in protein, so opt for a handful of raw almonds, pumpkin seeds or a seed and nut mix to keep you full between meals.

Nut butters provide a sweet and salty fix, and are another great way to add a dose of protein and healthy fat. Use a Vitamix to blend fresh peanut, almond or cashew butters and store in your refrigerator for easy access. Spread a serving on a banana, celery or cracker, and voila you've got a balanced snack! You can also blend a dab of nut butter in your smoothie for a quick flavor boost.

Snacks to stash

Whether you are hauling your children from practice to practice, juggling multiple projects at work or studying for exams, stress may bring mindless munching. Luckily, there are plenty of favorites you can make yourself that can satisfy your cravings in a more healthy manner.

If you're a fan of chips, consider baking your own, which will enable control over fat and sodium content, and allow you to consume all-natural ingredients. Pita chips hold up to dips and sauces such as salsa, hummus or guacamole, which are loaded with nutrients and provide an alternative to calorie-laden selections. Other chip varieties to consider are sweet potato and kale.

Wholesome, make-ahead options for those who crave sweets include homemade granola bars with dates, raisins, grains and seeds, or DIY dried fruit.

SEE **VITAMIX RECIPES** ON NEXT PAGE 



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Going Green Smoothie

Ingredients:

- ½ cup water
- 1 cup green grapes
- ½ cup pineapple chunks
- ½ ripe banana peeled
- 2 cups fresh spinach packed
- ½ cup ice cubes

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients into the Vitamix container in the order listed and secure lid.
2. Select Variable 1.
3. Turn machine on and slowly increase speed to Variable 10, then High.
4. Blend for 45 seconds or until desired consistency is reached. Serve immediately.

Almond Butter

Ingredients:

- 4 cups unsalted roasted almonds
- ¼ cup canola oil

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients into the Vitamix container in the order listed and secure lid.
2. Select Variable 1.
3. Turn machine on and slowly increase speed to Variable 10, then to High.
4. Use the tamper to press the ingredients into the blades.
5. In 1 minute you will hear a high-pitched chugging sound. Once the butter begins to flow freely through the blades, the motor sound will change and become low and laboring. Stop machine.
6. Store in an airtight container. It can also be frozen for longer storage.