



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Diabetes and snacks

Department of Diabetes and Dietetics

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about eating snacks if you have diabetes. It groups snacks by the amount of carbohydrate they contain.

This may be helpful to you if you have diabetes as knowing how much carbohydrate snacks contain could:

- Prevent you from getting high blood sugar (blood glucose) levels.
- Help you to follow a reduced carbohydrate diet.
- Help you to avoid having extra insulin injections or guide your insulin dosage.

The list of snacks and how much carbohydrate they contain can be used as a reference guide for portion size.

Please be aware, not all the snacks in this list are healthy. Some may be high in salt or fat.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because you have diabetes, and snacks may help you to:

- Keep up your energy levels.
- Help you to gain weight.
- Satisfy your appetite.
- Make sure you get enough nutrition.
- Improve your blood sugar (blood glucose) control.

Who should I ask for advice about snacks if I am taking insulin?

If you are taking insulin do talk about 'snacks' with your dietitian or diabetes specialist nurse as the advice for you may be different.

What five tips can help me to have snacks which will be better for me?

1. Have fruit and vegetable for snacks.

These make great snacks for people living with diabetes. They:

- Contain vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre that keep us healthy.
- Help us to have the 5 portions a day that the NHS recommends.

Fruit contains natural sugars which are absorbed (digested and taken into the blood) slowly and should not cause your blood sugars to rise too much. Be careful with portion control and the types of fruit you choose.

- Stick to a portion size that can fit in the palm of your hand (does not apply to dried fruit).
- Berries and melon contain much less sugar than bananas or grapes.

2. Snack on foods that are low in carbohydrates or that contain carbohydrate which is digested slowly.

These foods help to:

- Prevent your blood sugar from rising too quickly.
- Make you feel fuller for longer.

These foods include meat, fish seafood, avocado, eggs, beans, pulses such as lentils or chickpeas, raw vegetables, dairy foods, nuts, and seeds.

Foods containing carbohydrate are ranked by how quickly they are broken down into sugar (glucose) and absorbed into your blood. This ranking is called 'The Glycaemic index (GI)'.

Foods that are low 'GI' normally have plenty of fibre in them. This slows down digestion and causes blood sugar to rise more slowly than foods that are digested quickly (high 'GI').

3. Avoid eating snack foods that are high in sugar, saturated fats and salt.

Foods that are high in fat that comes from plants may be good for your health but can still lead to weight gain if you eat them too often.

4. Eat smaller portions.

Try having one piece or a handful of fruit, a matchbox size piece of cheese, a small handful of nuts or seeds or a small packet of crisps.

5. Use the suggestions in the table below to help you to choose snacks. Healthy heart choices are foods that are low in saturated fat, salt and sugar and are marked with this symbol ♥

Snacks containing Low - no carbohydrate	Raw carrot, cucumber, celery, or bell pepper sticks	♥ / Low GI
	Cherry tomatoes	♥ / Low GI
	Small Greek salad	Low GI
	Mozzarella and tomato salad	Low GI
	Olives	♥ / Low GI
	Half an avocado	♥ / High fat
	Eggs	
	Sugar free jelly	
	Sugar free ice –poles	
	Fridge raiders	
	Chicken satay skewer (40g pack)	High Fat
	Lean luncheon meats	High Salt
	Cheese (small matchbox size)	High fat
	Canned, smoked or fresh fish or seafood such as tuna, mackerel, salmon, or prawns)	May be high in fat / salt

Snacks with 5g of carbohydrate or less	Kiwi, satsuma, clementine or plum	♥ / Low GI
	Pickled gherkins, onions, sauerkraut	♥ / Low GI
	100g cottage cheese	Low GI
	115g edamame beans	♥ / Low GI
	25g Seeds. For example, pumpkin or sunflower	Low GI / high fat
	25g nuts, plain or uncoated	Low GI / high fat
	50g houmous	Low GI / high fat
	1 mini scotch egg*, falafel or pakora	*High fat
	3 cocktail sausages or 1 'Peperami' (22.5g)	High fat/ high salt
Snacks with 10g of carbohydrate or less	A small apple (85g)	
	Handful of berries	♥ / Low GI
	2 pineapple rings	♥ / Low GI
	1 grapefruit	♥ / Low GI
	4 figs	♥ / Low GI
	10 grapes (80g)	♥ / Low GI
	200ml cows milk	♥ / Low GI
	Greek, natural, plain or diet yoghurt (125g)	♥ / Low GI
	Mini box raisins or sultanas (11g/1tbsp)	Low GI
	2 breadsticks	
	20g plain popcorn	
	1 cracker, oatcake or rice cake	
	1 plain biscuit. Check the food label to choose healthier options.	High saturated fat
	15g of crisps	High fat / high salt

Snacks with 10 to 20g carbohydrate	Medium apple (131-170g) or pear (104g)	♥ / Low GI
	Small banana	♥
	3 dried apricots, dates, apple rings or prunes	♥ / Low GI
	1 medium slice bread (brown or seeded)	♥ / Low GI
	1 crumpet	
	1 mini pitta bread	
	Some cereal bars (check the label).	High sugar
	Fruit yoghurt (125g)	
	1 scoop (40g) sorbet	High sugar
	1 scoop of Ice cream	
	1 slice malt loaf	
	1 packet of sesame snaps (30g)	
	Large scotch egg	
	Breakfast cereal. For example 1 wheat biscuit (Weetabix®), wheat pillow (Shredded Wheat®), or oat biscuit (Oatybix®)	
	1/2 can Soup (200g). Some soups have less than 10g so check the label.	High salt
	25g of crisps	High fat / high salt
	2 fingers of KitKat®	High sugar
	1 serving (100g) quiche Lorraine. Crustless quiche has 7g less carbohydrate per portion.	High fat / saturated fat

Who can I contact if I would like further information or support?

Contact your local dietetics team:

St Richard's Hospital:

Phone: 01243 831 498

Email: uhsussex.chichesterdietitians@nhs.net

Worthing & Southlands Hospital:

Phone: 01903 286 779

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