

Snacking during the day can be a healthy habit, as it can help to keep blood sugar and energy levels steady. However, what you choose for mid-day edibles is important.

HEALTHY CHOICES

- 1. Berries.** They are sweet, easy to pop into your mouth, and a much healthier choice than a candy bar. Raspberries, blueberries, strawberries and blackberries are all anti-inflammatory, rich in flavonoids and carotenoids, and offer immune-boosting antioxidant activity. Choose organic when possible.
- 2. Crudités.** The fiber in veggies will help fill you up, and they provide a nice, satisfying crunch. Choose a wide range of colors (broccoli, cauliflower and carrots are good choices) and serve with hummus or organic, unsweetened yogurt - add some fresh herbs and seasonings for flavor.
- 3. Nuts.** When eaten sparingly, raw or lightly roasted nuts are a terrific snack. Walnuts are a good choice, as they are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Almonds and roasted soy nuts are also good choices. Nuts can be high in calories and fat (even if it's the healthy monounsaturated kind), so don't overindulge.
- 4. Dark chocolate.** An ounce of dark chocolate now and then will satisfy a sweet tooth while providing antioxidant polyphenols. Choose high-quality dark chocolate with at least 70 percent pure cocoa, and enjoy the rich flavor.

UNHEALTHY CHOICES

- 5. Doughnuts, cookies and cake.** High in sugar, trans fats, calories and refined flour, these are not only bad for your waistline, but bad for your energy levels as well. The high sugar content is likely to end in a midday crash.
- 6. Soft Drinks.** There just isn't anything nutritious about soda, whether it's diet or regular. Instead of a soda, try some sparkling water with a bit of fruit juice - you'll get the carbonation without all the empty calories.
- 7. French Fries.** Actually anything fried - from chicken to potatoes to onions to cheese - should be avoided. Deep-fried foods contain altered fats that are detrimental to the body. If you want finger foods, opt for carrot and celery sticks with a tasty dip.
- 8. Instant soups.** Very high in sodium, instant soup generally offers little health benefit in proportion to its sodium count. Total daily intake of sodium should not exceed 2300 mg and one serving of instant soup contains around 500mg; some kinds of Ramen soup are even worse, offering up to 800mg. A better option is low-sodium vegetable soup such as Japanese soba or udon.