

# Healthy Snacking

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS

*Developed by the AAHFN Patient Education Committee*



Heart disease can start during the teenage years. There are ways to prevent or slow the progression of heart disease, called modifiable risk factors. Ways to modify your risk factors of developing heart disease include:

- Stop smoking
- Maintain a healthy weight (BMI < 30)
- Exercise daily
- Eat a low-fat/low-sodium/low-sugar diet
- Limit stress
- Sleep 7-9 hours every night
- See your healthcare provider annually or more often if not feeling well
- Limit alcohol; Avoid illicit substances

Eating healthy is a large part of staying “heart healthy”. Since young adults lead an active, busy lifestyle with little time to cook from scratch (the healthiest way to eat!), here are some tips for nutritious snacking:

Choose **fruits and vegetables** as much as possible; goal is to eat 5-10 servings per day! These foods fill you up and contain no fat or sodium, with natural rather than processed sugar. Include an apple, grapes, carrot sticks, low-sodium crackers as finger-foods to keep you going.

Choose the **least-processed foods** such as nuts, raisins, fruits & vegetables. You can make your own trail mix very inexpensively to pack for the day.

**Protein** is important. Low-fat dairy products are a good choice, also low in sodium. Make sure it’s 1% or lower fat content. Many protein bars contain some protein, but can be loaded with sugar and fat.

Walnuts, flax seeds, and sardines are good sources of **protein** and **omega-3 fatty acids** (shown to reduce heart disease and bad cholesterol in your blood).

Avoid **saturated** and **trans fats** that cause fatty plaque to be deposited in the arteries of your heart and have been linked to cancer.

- **Saturated fats** are natural fats that are typically solid at room temperature. The majority of saturated fat foods are found in meat and dairy products, such as fatty beef, lamb, pork, poultry with skin, cream, butter, and cheese. You should eat no more than about 16 grams of saturated fats a day.
- **Trans fats** are manufactured from vegetable oils and are used to enhance the taste and extend the shelf-life of fast foods. Many fried foods, packaged snacks, commercial baked goods, and most margarine contain trans fats. Look at the food label and choose foods with 0 trans fats.

Plan ahead by packing the snacks listed above to take with you to work/ school.

When stopping at a gas station or convenience store, look for fresh fruit, yogurt, and nuts. Indulge every now and then on a small slushy drink that while high in sugar, has no fat or salt.



## Tips for eating at fast-food restaurants:

Traditional Fast-Food	Healthier Food Item	Benefits
<b>Double or Triple Burgers</b>	Single-patty hamburgers or grilled chicken	Saves fat, calories, and salt
<b>Cheeseburger</b>	Skip the cheese and instead add lettuce, tomato and onion	Increased fiber, saves fat, calories, and salt
<b>Special Sauce</b>	Substitute honey mustard sauce	Saves fat, calories, and salt
<b>Large French Fries</b>	If you must have fries, choose a small serving. Better yet, choose a bowl of fruit	Saves fat, calories, and salt
<b>Any types of Soda</b>	Choose unsweetened tea or water with lemon	Less sugar and artificial sweeteners
<b>Cobb, taco, or chicken tender salads</b>	Choose a house salad with grilled chicken and light or low fat salad dressing on the side. Ask for vinegar and substitute half of the dressing with vinegar- it really improves taste and stretches the dressing	Saves fat, calories, and salt
<b>Meat lovers, deep dish pizza</b>	If pizza is on the menu, choose thin crust, Canadian bacon instead of fattier meats, and load it with vegetables and pineapple	Saves fat, calories, and salt