Snacking

Snacking is an important way to make sure kids are getting enough energy and nutrients. For youth with diabetes, snacking can be a strategy to control blood glucose levels. It can also be a way to get kids with diabetes to eat all of the food in their meal plan with a little more flexibility.

What’s in a Good Snack?

Snacks with a good balance of carbohydrate, protein, and fat are best for controlling appetite and blood glucose. Most protein sources already naturally have some fat, so fat is not usually added to balance the snack. Here are some examples of carbohydrate and protein sources. Choose one item from each column for a balanced snack.

**Carbohydrate Source**

1/2 cup 100% juice  
7 Ritz crackers  
43 whole-grain fish crackers  
4 cups air-popped popcorn  
15 vanilla wafer cookies  
1/2 cup applesauce  
1 medium piece of fruit or 1 cup sliced fruit  
1 slice whole-grain bread  
1/2 whole-grain pita  
1 mini bagel (2.5” diameter)

**Protein Source**

1 oz low-fat string cheese  
1 tablespoon peanut butter  
1 oz reduced-fat hard cheese (Cheddar, Swiss, etc.)  
4 oz low-fat cottage cheese  
2 oz sliced chicken or turkey breast  
1-2 tablespoons hummus  
1 scrambled or hardboiled egg
Note: Six ounces light yogurt or 8 oz. low-fat milk contain both carbohydrate and protein for a balanced snack.

When To Snack

- Provide the snack midway between meals to control hunger and spikes in blood glucose.
- Provide two snacks if there is a long stretch of time between meals—the second snack should have mostly carbohydrates to keep blood glucose levels controlled before the next meal.

Snacking on the Go

- Plan ahead as much as possible.
- If blood sugar gets too low, treat the blood sugar and then give a snack.
- Use portable carbohydrate sources like apples, bananas, granola bars, and crackers; peanut butter, nuts, and canned tuna are good nonperishable protein source.

Balancing Snacks with Blood Glucose

- Consult with the child’s diabetes care team to figure out the best way to balance hunger, blood glucose, and insulin.