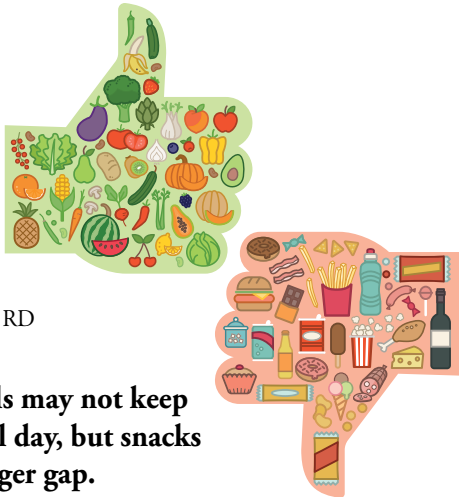


Snacks VS. Treats



By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Three daily meals may not keep you energized all day, but snacks help fill the hunger gap.

Studies show that distributing food daily across four to five small meals and snacks (rather than three large meals) favorably affects health. Snacks alleviate digestive and metabolic overload that can come from eating three large meals. Plus, nourishing snacks help ensure you get enough nutrients throughout the day.

How can you tell a snack from a treat? Snacks are mini-meals made of nourishing whole foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts and lean proteins. Treats are ultra-processed foods high in sugar, salt and/or fat, such as chips, soft drinks, fast food, pastries and candy.

Between meals, fuel up with options that offer some protein paired with fiber-rich carbs. Examples include:

- Apple and cheddar cheese.
- Nuts, seeds and dried fruit.
- Vegetables and hummus.
- Yogurt with fruit.
- Banana with peanut butter.
- Berries and cottage cheese.
- Crackers with egg or tuna salad.



Treats provide pleasure and enjoyment, are meant to be enjoyed, but in smaller amounts eaten less often than snacks. Treats don't add meaningful amounts of vitamins, minerals or fiber to your diet and tend to be high in sugar and sodium.

Studies show that people who eat lots of treats, especially in the evening while distracted by a screen, tend to have diets that are less nourishing and more likely to contribute to weight gain.

Life's Essential 8

Getting enough sleep? A duration of seven to nine hours daily for adults, and more for children, is considered necessary for good health, according to the American Heart Association's (AHA) new Life's Essential 8. Because of sleep's importance to our well-being, the AHA has added healthy sleep to its previously seven key components of heart health.

During American Heart Month in February consider the eight factors that protect your cardiovascular (CV) system:



1. Healthy diet: Updated with a new guide to assess diet.
2. Participation in physical activity.
3. Avoidance of nicotine exposure: Updated to account for vaping and secondhand smoke.
4. Healthy weight.
5. Healthy blood lipids: Updated to adjust blood cholesterol measures.
6. Healthy blood glucose: Updated to adjust blood sugar measures.
7. Healthy blood pressure.
8. Healthy sleep: New.



As noted above, the AHA has updated four of the previous Essential 7 factors to help you more effectively lower your risk for heart disease, stroke and other major health problems.

This latest AHA health checklist showed about 80% of U.S. adults had moderate to low CV health, with lowest scores occurring in diet, physical activity and BMI (body mass index).

Just 19.6% of U.S. adults had high CV health; 62.5% had moderate CV health and 17.9% had low CV health. Adult women had higher average CV health scores than men. The AHA used a new method of scoring each component to average an overall heart health score on a scale from 0 to 100.

Got Scary News Anxiety? Here's Help

It's important to stay aware of what's happening in your community, country and the world. But a barrage of headlines about war, shootings, pandemics and financial woes, day after day, can harm your mental health.

You can't ignore the news, but these tips can help you cope.

- **Stop doom scrolling.** After you've read frightening news, there's no reason to read details about the event over and over.
- **Limit your news consumption.** There's a big difference between checking news once or twice a day and every few minutes. Consider deleting news apps to give yourself a mental break.
- **Commit to consistent, tried-and-true stress management techniques.** Daily exercise, adequate sleep and eating healthy all help combat stress and mitigate news anxiety.
- **Calm hopeless feelings with practical action.** If worrisome news makes you feel hopeless, take realistic action when you can. For example, write your representatives or recycle and donate household items you no longer need to charity.



Healthy Body, Healthy Heart

Each day your heart beats, on average, 100,000 times, pumping your blood through a vast system of blood vessels that's more than 60,000 miles long. Your heart is an amazing engine, but it needs your help to keep blood moving.

Lower your risk of cardiovascular disease:

- » **Manage your blood pressure** to reduce strain on your heart, arteries and kidneys.
- » **Monitor your blood cholesterol** to give your arteries their best chance to remain free of blockage.
- » **Stop using tobacco.** Cigarette smoking significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.
- » **Maintain healthy blood sugar** to help prevent type 2 diabetes, a factor that can damage your heart, kidneys and nerves.
- » **Eat well.** A heart-smart eating plan contains lots of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, nuts and fish. It's also lower in refined flour, salt, meat and sweets.
- » **Move every day.** Getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity weekly (any amount is beneficial, but more is better), such as brisk walking, helps reduce your heart disease risk.
- » **Maintain a healthy weight.** Both aerobic exercise and resistance (weight) training burn calories, aid weight loss and help improve your baseline metabolic rate. The more muscle mass you develop, the more calories you burn. Losing even 10% of your weight can reduce the burden on your heart. Your health care provider can help you safely manage your weight.
- » **Watch your alcohol intake.** The American Heart Association advises that men should have no more than two drinks per day, and women should have no more than one drink per day. If you don't drink alcohol, don't start.
- » **Make time to sleep.** You need seven to nine hours every night (or day, if you work shifts). Quality sleep allows the body to repair itself and helps reduce inflammation, a contributing factor in heart ailments. Did you know? Sleep deprivation is linked to high blood pressure and heart disease, according to the CDC.



Urgent Care 101

Urgent care centers are not the same as emergency rooms (ERs). Understanding the difference can help you make the right decision when you need care but aren't sure where to go for specific injuries or symptoms.

If you can't contact your health care provider easily for advice, it makes sense to seek immediate medical care. Here are the basics on deciding between urgent care and the ER:

Urgent care centers provide easy access to quality medical care, including office-based laboratory tests, such as urinalysis, rapid strep assays and X-rays, when your regular health care provider isn't available.

But it's not a substitute for regular health care. Instead, urgent care is for urgent — but not emergency — concerns. For example, urgent care facilities treat cuts that need stitches (but aren't bleeding profusely), mild to moderate asthma symptoms, fever or flu, minor broken bones or swelling from falls, irritated eyes, moderate back problems, severe sore throat or cough, urinary tract infections and vomiting, diarrhea, or dehydration.

It's important to know when to skip urgent care and head straight to the ER or call 911. Medical emergencies are potentially life-threatening and require ER care. These include compound fractures (with bones protruding through the skin), heart attack or stroke symptoms, seizures, loss of consciousness, deep wounds of any kind, pregnancy-related problems, poisoning, bad burns, severe bleeding, serious back or head injuries.



Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **The Value of Prevention**, is at personalbest.com/extras/23V2tools.

