

About snacking

More of us are snacking in addition to, or instead of, our three meals a day. What kind of snacker are you, and how do we make sure our snacks are the right kind?



Snacking statistics

Snacking's a growing phenomenon that's changing how many of us eat and shop. Some of us eat snacks as well as eating three meals, while increasing numbers are skipping meals completely and replacing them with snacks.

A surprising 60% of UK adults eat snacks instead of full meals, with almost 30% of young women admitting to replacing meals with snacks daily.

The reasons behind snacking

In a report by Harris Interactive, almost a third of respondents named convenience their main reason for snacking, saying it was 'easier'.

Another 18% reported the need to eat 'on the go', while another 20% cited not wanting to cook or lacking time to plan meals.

The research showed that lunch was the most-skipped meal, followed by breakfast then dinner.

Snacking by age

Research carried out by trend analysts Nielsen found that 93% of shoppers surveyed look for fruit and vegetables to snack on during the week, saving treats for the weekend.

Millennials are the most price-conscious age group and they are most likely to replace meals with snacks. Indulgent snacks are favoured by Generation Xers, while many baby boomers plan ahead and choose healthier snacks.

Tips for healthy snacking

- Have a drink of water first – thirst and hunger are similar sensations
- Portion size – it's easy to think a snack's not a meal and eat too much
- Choose your snacks carefully – avoid nibbles with added salt or sugar
- Fruit and vegetables should be your first-choice snack
- Plan your snacks – planning and shopping for healthy snacks encourages you to stay away from unhealthy snacks
- Don't shop when you're hungry: you may end up with unhealthy snacks

What kind of snacker are you?

Nielsen's research into snacking led them to develop seven categories of snackers:

- Impulsive: those who buy unplanned snacks, like new products near the till
- Planner: the planner knows exactly what they need from the supermarket
- Meal replacement: serious about snacking, this group looks for products to help them refuel
- Healthy: avoiding treats is important for wellness snackers, who are after nutritionally beneficial snacks
- Investigator: looking at labels matters to canny consumers who want a balance between price and nutrition
- Promo: if it's on offer, it will find its way into promo snackers' trollies who are influenced most by price
- Indulgent: emotional eaters are shopping for treats that make them feel good, like sweets, chocolates and crisps

Snack ideas

The NHS recommends a calories intake of 2000 a day for women and 2500 for men. Here are some ideas for healthy snacks between meals, ranging from 50-150 calories:

- Banana
- Rice cake
- Hummus with carrot sticks
- Wholemeal toast or pitta
- Small plain yoghurt with fruit
- Plain popcorn
- Small handful of unsalted nuts



Being on the go for longer – be it working, commuting or caring – means we're snacking more than ever before.