

The Art of Snacking.

An important concept in designing a successful long-term diet is to ensure that participants “**Never go Hungry**”. Long-term success of a **never go hungry diet** is based on two fundamental principles.

First, is to design breakfast, lunch and dinner such that carbs and sugar are kept to an absolute minimum. (Avoiding carbs will prolong the return of hunger). In addition, maintaining a diet of unprocessed whole foods that provide the essential nutrients to ensure you are not overeating because of the body’s attempt to replace them.

Second, is to pick the right **between meal snacks** to satisfy food cravings that occur between meals. Having confidence that you will not go hungry between meals provides the confidence to avoid over eating when it comes to eating your main meals.

The “proof” comes from a comprehensive 30-year diet study involving approximately 110,000 men and women whose diet was strictly monitored. One of the most important conclusions of the study was that **eating nuts improved health and facilitated weight loss**. The group of people that consumed the largest quantity of nuts had the lowest average weight.

Additionally, the higher the nut consumption, the lower the risk of heart disease, cancer and many other serious conditions.

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How does it work? First of all nuts are highly nutritious, containing important vitamins and minerals. They are also high in natural fiber that slows absorption and delays hunger. But, most important, **nuts are high in fats!** Substituting calories from carbs and replacing them with calories from **plant fats** (see list below) is a critical step in designing of a successful long-term weight loss program.

Why nuts are superstars of any weight loss program?

- They are **inexpensive**.
- They are **convenient**: easily stored in purse, car, office and home.
- They are chock **full of nutrients and high in natural fiber**.

Which nut is best? I suggest you try a variety of nuts and pick the ones that you like best. However, the best nuts for weight loss are the nuts that are highest in fats.

- Best choice: Macadamia nuts and pecans. (highest in fats and lowest in carbs).
- Worst choice is cashews (highest in carbs and lowest in fats).
- Peanut butter and other nut butters are also great snacks.

List of other healthy snacks that when eaten in moderation improve health and facilitate weight loss:

- **Seeds:** flax and chia seeds (see ask doc on “Chia Fresca”). Others include sesame, pumpkin, sunflower, and hemp.
- **Avocados:** A **super food** packed with nutrients and healthy plant fat (also consider guacamole. Hold the chips and eat in moderation)
- **Eggs:** (grass fed and free range best choice)
- **Proteins: beans, fish, chicken and meat.** Be careful to avoid excess protein on a low carb diet. High protein intake **will** cause the **liver to convert** the amino acids found in **protein** into **sugar**.

- The ultimate goal is to get approximately 40% calories from protein, 40% from fats and 10% from carbs. (Note: this is just a **rough estimate**).
- **What to drink?** Water, coffee and tea are best choices.
- - What about alcohol: if you elect to drink alcohol, the best choice is hard liqueur like vodka or gin (in moderation).
- **The Good Oils:** Extra Virgin olive oil (not for cooking) coconut and avocado.
 - **Olives are also a healthy choice**
- **Leafy vegetables:** spinach, broccoli, brussels sprouts, kale. Also, include carrots, peas and Edamame beans.
- **Fruits and berries:** Fruits contain sugar and should be eaten in moderation. Best choices: blackberries and Granny Smith apples (do not remove skin)
- **Yogurt: Only if no sugar added.**

The final superstar is dark chocolate: (73% coco good; 85% better and 100% Is best). To make 100% more palatable I combine it with the 85%. I am surprised how good it tastes and it's filling). More about this in next month's "Ask the Doctor".

Final thoughts:

- Do not obsess. If you follow the basic principals you will lose weight. I suggest you throw away your scales. You know your diet is working when you need a smaller dress size.
- Don't forget the importance of exercise in facilitating weight loss and improving general health.

If you have comments or suggestions you can contact me at:
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