Got The Munchies?

It's okay, snacking ain't so bad.

February 27, 2009 By LaToya Johnson

Afraid that eating between meals might pack on extra pounds? Fear not. Studies found that people who eat three small meals and two or three healthy snacks a day lose more weight than those who eat only three large meals.

"Eating frequently and grazing instead of gorging can increase your metabolism, which burns more calories," says nutritionist Goulda Downer, PhD, RD, of Washington, DC (and a *RH* contributor).

"It also curbs your appetite, which can stop overeating." But she emphasizes that the key word is healthy. "Attention must be paid to what is eaten since mindless fueling can add extra calories and unwanted pounds."

Downer recommends: Avoid popular snack foods such as chips, cookies, ice cream, candy bars and sodas because they are generally high calorie, high fat or too sugary. While tasty, they're not filling and will trigger another craving soon after eating them.

***RH* says:** If you must, you can treat yourself to one of these snacks every now and then. But instead, try stocking up on high-fiber foods (3 grams of fiber or more per serving) such as fruits and vegetables and whole grains too. Also add some protein-rich foods including low-fat cheese or yogurt, seeds and nuts to the mix—they will keep you satisfied longer.

Tip: Make sure your snack is between 150 to 200 calories and eaten every 2.5 to 3 hours. "You need just enough fuel to keep you satisfied until your next meal," Downer adds.

Staff Memo

Here's a list of healthy low-calorie treats we're feasting on at the *RH* office:

¼ cup dried fruit mix
2 cups of air-popped or light popcorn
1 ounce or a small handful of almonds (about 24)
1 cup low-fat cottage cheese topped with ½ cup fresh pineapples
1 cup of grapes

2 organic oatmeal raisin cookies
6 baby carrots with half a cup of garlic hummus

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