Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Nutrition and Dietetics

Paediatric diabetes - Snacks

If you have any questions, please speak to your paediatric dietitian, diabetes nurse or paediatrician.

Myth busting

When you have diabetes, you do not usually 'need' to eat snacks unless you have been advised to do so by your dietitian. If main meals are well balanced (contain carbs, protein and vegetables), a lack of snacks should not cause hypoglycaemia.

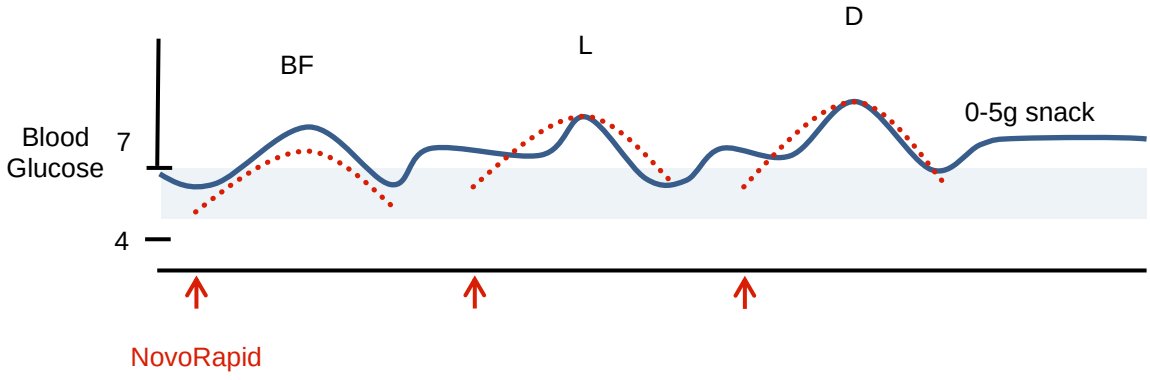
All children and adults (not just those with diabetes) should limit processed snacks (such as crisps, biscuits, cakes) **to 1-2 portions per week**.

Consider the reason for snacking

In most children, you should only give snacks if your child is hungry. **This is to avoid creating unhealthy "grazing" habits,** which can contribute to obesity later in life. Current research also shows that grazing is associated with higher HbA1c. Therefore, a routine eating pattern is important in diabetes management.

If hunger is the reason for snacking, vegetables and fruit will provide greater satiety per carb amount than biscuits or other snack foods.

How many carbs and why



For optimal diabetes control, the aim is to keep blood glucose between 4mmol/l - 7mmol/l pre meals. **Any carbohydrate given without insulin will increase your blood glucose level. It's important to choose snacks that contain little or no carbohydrates as much as possible**.

If your child is still hungry between meals, you can:

- Offer snacks that has very little or no carbohydrates. Limit this to less than 5g of carbohydrates.

  Some low-carbohydrate snacks can be high in fat and salt, e.g. processed meats. Be mindful of healthy eating advice when choosing low-carbohydrate snacks.
- If you offer a larger carbohydrate snack, your child will need an extra insulin injection.
- If your child is continually hungry between meals, consider whether mealtime portions should be increased. Is there always a protein/ vegetable source? Can the mealtimes be adjusted?

Children under 5 years of age may need a bigger snack to meet their nutritional requirements. Your dietitian can give individualised advice.

If your child feels hungry before going to bed, limit their bedtime snacks to no more than 5g of carbohydrates. Or take an insulin bolus with it if it contains more than 5g of carbohydrates.

If you still have problems with your blood glucose levels at night or overnight, please speak to your dietitian, diabetes nurse or paediatrician.

Which foods are best for snacks?

Snacks with 0-5g carbohydrate

- Cucumber sticks or slices
- Cherry tomatoes
- Celery sticks
- Sweet pepper slices
- 1 String cheese or low-fat cheese
- 1 handful of unsalted nuts or seeds
- Sugar-free jelly
- Ice lollies made with no added sugar squash

- Low-fat cold cut of meat (turkey, chicken, low-fat ham)
- Fish without breading or batter
- Up to 4 x Cocktail Sausages
- Tofu or Quorn
- Eggs
- Olives
- Avocado or guacamole
- 30g serving of humous
- Peanut butter
- Approximately 60g Natural Yogurt (always check the label) or 1 x 37g kids fruit yoghurt tube
- Up to 25g grapes
- Up to 80g Strawberries (hulled)
- Up to 90g Raspberries
- ½ small apple (up to 40g)

Low carbohydrate snack inspiration

- Scrambled eggs with chopped cooked low-carbohydrate vegetables e.g., peppers, spinach or mushrooms
- Omelette - you can fill an omelette with low-carbohydrate vegetables, meat/Quorn and top with low-fat cheese
- Eggs baked in a dish with ½ Tin of Chopped Tomatoes (flavour with herbs, garlic, and onions and add low-carbohydrate vegetables as desired)
- Boiled egg with spinach or avocado
- Selection of low-fat cooked meats
- Scrambled tofu with chopped, cooked low-carbohydrate vegetables
- Tuna/meat/cheese/egg salad
- Tinned tuna/salmon with cucumber sticks or avocado
- Selection of vegetable sticks with dips low fat humous, guacamole or cream cheese
- Chopped tomatoes with low-fat mozzarella slices (you could add more flavour with a drizzle of pesto)

- Cherry tomatoes with avocado
- ½ small apple with peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon natural yoghurt with 7 raspberries
- Fruit in sugar-free jelly (prepare sugar-free jelly crystals with water and pour over individual pots of a few frozen berries)
- Yoghurt in sugar-free jelly (prepare sugar-free jelly crystals with water and beat in natural Greek yoghurt before allowing to set. Up to 2 tablespoons of Greek yoghurt can be included per portion)
- Homemade summer berry ice lollies (prepare in individual moulds with sugar-free berry squash and add a few frozen berries to each mould)

Produced by Coventry & Rugby Paediatric Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust

Contact number: 024 7696 6161

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