

FOODforLIFE!

That tea-time treat to perk you up and boost your energy levels has a bad reputation – but not all snacks are created equal.

Here're some healthier treats to tame the mid-day munchies!

By Louisa Foo

IN CONSULTATION WITH ELISA MAK, DIETITIAN

Snacking smart

Snacking can be healthy as long as you choose the right snack and if it helps you meet your nutrient requirements without exceeding your total caloric requirements for the day. Elisa Mak, Dietitian, JurongHealth, explained, **"Whether snacking is unhealthy depends on the type of snacks you choose, the amount you eat and if the snacks add on to those excess calories that you require for the day."**

In fact, it is common to feel a little peckish in-between meals when our blood sugar dips. "During our hunger pangs and our search for an energy fuel, we will possibly grab the most convenient snack, and that is likely to be an unhealthy one," Ms Mak said. "Convenience foods such as potato chips or curry puffs may be an easy on-the-go food during hunger pangs but these snacks are high in sodium, high in fat and calorie dense. In the long run, these do not provide much nutritional benefit and only lead to potential weight gain."

To snack smarter, plan ahead, she advised. "If you notice a trend of a specific time of day when you feel hungry, plan ahead to have a healthy snack before encountering the hunger pangs." Alternatively, drink some water first as we often confuse the cue for thirst with hunger. **Snack only when you need it and avoid mindless snacking due to boredom, stress or habit.** Resist urges to nibble when watching television or working at your desk," Ms Mak added. "It's also important to watch portion sizes when snacking to avoid too much of a good thing."

Have
**low-fat
yoghurt**
for a creamy
comforting
way to bump
up your
calcium
intake





Grab a handful of **unsalted roasted nuts** such as almonds or cashews



Jazz up your fruit. Have a small spoonful of low-fat peanut butter with apple slices or celery sticks for a flavourful protein boost!

Pair **wholemeal crackers** with low-fat cheese



Make it meatless; opt for a **small steamed vegetarian pau or all-veggie Nyonya popiah** with less sweet sauce

Prepare a **soy green tea latte** with a glass of reduced-sugar soy milk and green tea powder



Have a handful of **steamed chickpeas.** They're low in fat but high in fibre, protein and vitamins

Reach for a bowl of **soya bean curd** with less sugar syrup

Have a few slices of **grilled lightly-seasoned chicken breasts** and eat with cucumber sticks

Prepare **fresh vegetable sticks** and dip them into plain yogurt mixed with herbs