

## Atkins Snack Choices

We live in a society of nibblers. Long gone are the traditional three square meals per day. Today, people eat at their desks, catch a snack in the afternoon and eat late night goodies. Most, if not all, of these snacks are carbohydrate based and full of sugar. This poses a challenge to people who are trying to follow the Atkins plan. Snacking is a necessary part of keeping your blood sugar up, but most packaged snack foods are forbidden on the plan.

Sweet snacks are high in calories, full of empty carbohydrates and offer no nutritional value. But they sure are popular. There is actually a Snack Food Association that tracks sales of packaged snack foods. It is estimated that Americans eat 3.1 billion pounds of chocolate. Snacking has increased more than a third since 1988. Sales of snack foods gross over \$30 billion a year.

If you've been a snack food junkie you've become used to eating carbohydrates of the worst kind. Snack foods are made from highly refined carbohydrates like white flour, white sugar, corn meal and corn syrup. They are high in trans-fats (which is a contributor to clogged arteries). All in all, they are probably one of the worst food choices you could be making.

But there is hope! You can conquer your love of snack foods by making Atkins-friendly snacking choices. Before you can make the switch, make sure to educate yourself. Understand just how dangerous trans fats can be by reading up on them. Then read the ingredients label of your favorite snack foods. You may be shocked to discover how many trans fats, artificial flavorings and preservatives that you are eating.

Next, get rid of all of the snack foods in your house. If its not there, then you can't eat it. Junk food is not good for anyone in your home so ignore your family's complaints and do what is best for the health of everyone.

Now you'll need to replace those snack foods with some better choices. Giving up your snack foods is not the same as giving up snacks. Snacks should be a part of your daily eating plan because it will help you from becoming too hungry and indulging in high-carbohydrate treats.

There are plenty of low carbohydrate snacks that are easy to make and simple to have around the house. String cheese sticks or small cheese rounds are very easy to keep in the refrigerator. Meat snacks are also a good choice. You can buy jerky strips and other meat products that keep well for long periods of time. When you buy cheese or meat sticks, make sure to read the labels carefully for hidden carbs.

There are low carb instant soups available that are very easy to make and satisfying if you are craving something hot. Low carb soy chips and celery can help with "crunchy" cravings. Try adding peanut butter or cream cheese spread to add more protein to these snacks. Also, you can't beat a handful of nuts for a high-protein, quick snack.

All of the previously mentioned snacks are good for the initial phases of the Atkins diet and beyond. If you are past the induction phase, you can enjoy berries with cream as a snack. There are also many acceptable fruits that make good snacks for the pre-maintenance phase.

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