



F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 4

NEWSLETTER

Heart Health

February is Heart Health Month, and what better way to celebrate than learning how to mindfully snack for our hearts! The foods we eat can directly impact our cardiovascular health, so it's no surprise that improving our diets in small ways will help keep our cholesterol and blood pressure levels in check. What makes a snack heart healthy? Let's take a look!

1. High in Fiber

In general, Americans don't meet the recommended daily intake of 25-30 grams/per day. Consuming grains, fruits, and vegetables boosts your fiber intake, which in turn reduces your risk of high cholesterol and **heart disease!** Fiber consists of plant material that the human body lacks enzymes to break down---eating fiber rich foods along with adequate fluid intake is one way to treat your heart right! There are two types we should be seeking to incorporate in our snacks each day:

- **Soluble Fiber:** Foods like apples, citrus fruits, and oatmeal absorb water into the digestive tract which help slow down digestion to better increase nutrient absorption.
- **Insoluble Fiber:** Foods like whole grain breads/cereals and popcorn do not absorb water into the digestive tract and remain unchanged throughout the digestive process. Because of this, insoluble fiber help to bulk up stool. This is important because it binds to cholesterol in the small intestine and works its way through our system to get rid of it---which results in...you guessed it... lowered cholesterol!

2. Low in Sodium

It should first be noted that sodium shouldn't be avoided entirely. It's a natural flavor enhancer to our foods, and an extracellular electrolyte that contributes to muscle contraction and fluid balance! However, consuming high amounts of sodium from heavily processed foods can be trouble because sodium pulls water into our blood vessels causing our hearts to work harder---which is literally what high blood pressure is. Seek snacks like oatmeal, frozen grapes, or a fresh fruit smoothie more often than you would potato chips and fast food.

3. Focus on Healthy Fats

Choosing appropriate fat sources is a critical part of seeking heart healthy snacks. In general, saturated fats found in cheese, milk, and red meat should be limited to less than 10% of your total daily calories. However, unsaturated fats like mono- and poly- work wonders for your heart by reducing cholesterol levels in your blood--which can lower your risk of heart disease. Seek snacks like unsalted nuts, avocados, and flaxseed (add that to your smoothie!) to start reaping the benefits.

Happy February and cheers to snacking our hearts out!

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Rochelle Sward, RDN, LDN | rochelle.sward@sodexo.com | 651-635-2334



Sweet Pea & Feta Toast



PREP TIME: 3 to 5 minutes
COOK TIME: 5 to 10 minutes
YIELD: 4 servings; 2 toasts

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups green peas, fresh or frozen
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 8 slices crusty, textured whole grain bread, such as from a “health” loaf (½-inch-thick slices) or multigrain baguette sliced into long slices on a bias
- 1 medium radish, thinly sliced into half moons
- 1 scallion, green and white section, thinly sliced
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese (2 ounces)
- ¼ cup fresh dill fronds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. If using fresh peas, place them in a saucepan with ½ cup of water. Bring to a boil, then simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until they are tender but still bright green, about 5 to 10 minutes depending on the size and starchiness of the peas. Drain the peas, then transfer them to an ice bath for a few minutes to stop the cooking and drain again. If using frozen peas, heat them in a saucepan on the stove or in a bowl in the microwave until thawed but still cool.
2. Transfer the peas to the small bowl of a food processor. Add two tablespoons of the oil, lemon juice, zest, salt and ¼ teaspoon of the pepper. Pulse several times, until the mixture is spreadable but retains some texture.
3. Toast the bread, then spread 2 heaping tablespoons of the pea mixture onto each piece of toast. Top each with a few radish slices and some scallion, cheese and dill. Drizzle each toast with ¼ teaspoon of the remaining olive oil, and sprinkle with the remaining black pepper.

NUTRITION FACTS: 2 Toasts

Cal.	Cal. Fat	Tot. Fat	Sat. Fat	Trans Fat	Chol.	Sodium	Carbs	Fiber	Sugar	Protein
320	120	13g	3.5g	0g	15mg	670mg	40g	5g	5g	11g

2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice, but calorie needs vary. Additional nutritional information available upon request.



This product contains:
MILK
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GLUTEN