



Ask the diet pros

Words to eat by from our go-to nutrition gals, Willow Jarosh, R.D., and Stephanie Clarke, R.D.

Q *Should I snack midmorning or between lunch and dinner?* —Karen Bauer, Englewood, New Jersey

A Both! We suggest noshing two or three times a day: about three hours after breakfast, three hours post-lunch and then again after dinner at least an hour before bed, if you're hungry. If you go more than four hours without eating, your blood sugar will drop, leaving you ravenous and prone to overeating at the next meal, not to mention cranky and tired. Choose filling nibbles with at least 3 grams of fiber and 5 g of protein, such as a mix of dried fruit, nuts and whole-grain cereal. Size matters, too. To maintain your weight (you should be eating 1,800 to 2,000 calories a day), have three 200-calorie daily snacks. Those trying to drop pounds (don't dip below 1,600 daily calories!) can enjoy two 200-calorie or three 150-calorie morsels. Snack smart to stay full and focused.

Q *Tons of pasta options are available. Which type is best for me?* —Danielle Styles, Atlanta

A The ingredients and nutritional value of noodles can vary, so check out our chart to see how each variety stacks up. Whichever pasta type you choose, stick to a moderate portion of 1 to 1½ cups to control calories, and top it with a vegetable-based sauce like marinara instead of a creamy, high-fat one such as Alfredo.

PASTA	KEY INGREDIENT(S)	CALORIES	FIBER	PROTEIN	NUTRITION LOWDOWN
Whole-wheat	Whole-wheat flour	180 per cooked cup	6 g	7 g	This star starch's bran and germ (the outer layer and seed that are removed from other grains in refining) supply more fiber and vitamins than white pasta.
Traditional white	Semolina (refined durum wheat)	220 per cooked cup	2.5 g	7 g	Because it's missing fiber-filled bran, semolina isn't as filling as whole-wheat pasta is. And it's quicker to digest, so your blood sugar may spike and dip.
Egg	Semolina, eggs	220 per cooked cup	2 g	7 g	Unlike other pastas, egg noodles have saturated fat (0.67 g per cup) and cholesterol (46 mg). It's not the healthiest white pasta, but an occasional cup is OK.
Spinach	Semolina, spinach	200 per cooked cup	2 g	7 g	It may be green, but this pasta doesn't deliver a single veggie serving per cup. If you like the taste, fine; if it's fiber you want, toss spinach with whole-wheat noodles.
Gluten-free	Brown rice, corn, soy or quinoa (none contains the protein gluten)	180 to 200 per cooked cup	2 to 5 g	4 g	Gluten-free is great for those with celiac disease (an inability to tolerate gluten), but if you're aiming to shed pounds, know it won't shave major calories.



Greek yogurt, granola and berries supply satisfying protein and fiber.

Q *Are hemp seeds healthier than others?*

—Danielle Shavell, Richboro, Pennsylvania

A Caloriewise, hemp seeds are similar to other seeds, but they are a better source of protein (3 tablespoons have 11 g, compared with 5 g in sunflower seeds), which helps build calorie-torching lean muscle. Hemp's protein is also higher quality than that of other seeds—it has key amino acids others don't provide enough of and that your body can't make. And hemp seeds are rich in alpha-linolenic acids, omega-3 fatty acids that may improve heart health. If you like their nutty flavor, have 'em. If not, you can get ALAs from flaxseed and high-quality proteins from soy and fish.