

**UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND GERIATRIC MEDICINE**

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**UNIVERSITY of LOUISVILLE**  
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## Perils of Skipping Meals

Whether we are busy, sleeping, or caught in traffic, skipping meals is not good for weight management or health.

### When we don't eat we:

- Get over-hungry and over-eat, not because we lack "will power," but because our bodies are programmed to survive. When we get over-hungry we eat like food is scarce!
- Make unhealthy choices because we become so hungry that we can only think about getting food. The food we crave is usually quick and easy like soft drinks, fast food, and chips from our cabinets, the gas station, or vending machines.

### Skipping meals:

- Causes the body to lower its metabolism (how much energy it needs to function)
- Causes us to burn less energy, fewer calories
- Can lead us to gain weight when we eat our usual amount of food
- Leaves us with little energy because the body has run out of the fuel we get from food
- Leaves us sluggish and tired
- Causes headaches or makes us feel weak and shaky

**Many people believe skipping meals or eating less often helps us to lose weight.**

**Nothing could be further from the truth.**

- We feel our best if we eat healthy foods about every 4-6 hours while we are awake.
- Eating small frequent meals actually helps us to lose weight.

## PREPARE FOR HUNGER

Eating at regular times of the day can help us control how many calories we take in, but running errands can run into your meal times. Follow these tips to avoid eating at a fast food restaurant or a gas station, where we often chose foods that we like instead of smart and moderate amounts of food.

- Try to carry healthy food with you, in the car, or stock up on food at work so that you can have healthy food on hand.
- Always pre-bag snacks so you have the right portion size.
- Snacks to keep in the car:
  - \* Pretzels: 28 small sticks = 110 calories
  - \* Nuts: 1/3 cup = 270 calories
  - \* Peanut butter sandwich crackers:  
4 sandwiches = 140 calories
  - \* Vegetable juice: 6 oz. can = 60 calories
  - \* Popcorn (popped at home):  
1 fat-free bag = 100 calories

### A healthy daily diet looks something like this:

- 3-6 evenly-spaced eating events about every 4-6 hours while awake
- Protein-rich foods during at least 3 eating events from dairy, animal or vegetable sources
- A least 4 calcium-rich foods , or supplements
- Several servings of fruits and vegetables (dark green and citrus are best)
- 6-11 servings of breads and cereals (whole grains are best)
- Healthy fats and oils, whether in foods or added (liquid oils, nuts, poultry, fish, n-3 fatty acids, etc.)

**See Other Side for  
More Snack Ideas!**

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# Perils of Skipping Meals

## SNACK IDEAS

Calories and servings are *estimated*.

Reading a food label for serving sizes and calories is the most accurate method.

Satiety is the *average* amount of time you will feel no physical need to eat.

**Each person is different.**

<b>Food</b>	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Satiety</b>
Vegetable juice, 12 oz.	70	0-1 hrs
Banana, 1 medium	105	1 hr
Pretzels, 28 small sticks (snack bag)	110	1-2 hrs
Light ice cream, ½ cup	110	1-2 hrs
Potato chips, ¾ oz (snack bag)	110	1-2 hrs
Skim or 1% milk, 1 cup	100	1-2 hrs
Vegetable beef soup, 1 cup, with 8 Triscuit® Crackers	240	2 hrs
Yogurt with fruit, 6-8 oz. carton	200	2 hrs
Cereal, 1 cup, with 1 cup of 1% milk	200	2-3 hrs
Cottage cheese, ¾ cup, with ½ cup fruit	240	2-3 hrs
Apple with 1 oz. cheese	140	2-3 hrs
Raisins, 2 Tbsp (snack box), and 8 walnuts	170	2-3 hrs
Mixed nuts, ⅓ cup	270	2-3 hrs
Popcorn, 3 cups, with 1 oz. cheese	170	2-3 hrs
Sandwich with 1 Tbsp peanut butter on 1 slice bread	130	2-3 hrs
Peanut butter, 2 Tbsp, on 6 crackers	300	3-4 hrs
Sandwich with 1 oz. meat or cheese on 2 slices bread	140	3-4 hrs
Sandwich with ¼ cup water-packed tuna and 1Tbsp light mayo on 2 slices of bread	160	3-4 hrs
Cheese, 1 oz., on 6 crackers	220	3-4 hrs
Pretzels, 10 thin twists, with ¼ cup mixed nuts	315	3-4 hrs
Pear with ¼ cup mixed nuts	300	3-4 hrs

**MY GOALS:**

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# Perils of Skipping Meals

## POSITIVES OF HEALTHY EATING BALANCE

Did you know that part of what makes us hungry is when our blood sugar level drops about ten percent? Why is that? Much of the food we eat eventually turns into blood sugar to give our cells energy. When our cells have drained much of the sugar from the blood stream, we get the feeling that we need to eat again!

Have you ever noticed that after eating some foods you are hungry soon? And after eating other foods you stay satisfied for 4 to 6 hours? Here is the reason: if we choose a healthy combination of foods rich in protein, carbohydrate and fat when we eat, we will feel satisfied and not think about food for 4 to 6 hours. However, if we eat protein, carbohydrates or fats by themselves, we may still feel hungry or get hungry very soon. Fruits and vegetables are very important for their vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals but eaten by themselves do not keep us food satisfied for very long.

How does this affect weight management? If we are not careful about planning what we eat, we can eat more than we need because the food/s do not keep us satisfied, then it is easy to overeat. Here are meal and snack guidelines with ideas to help us pick a healthy combination of foods at meals and snacks:

### Meals

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Starch                 | Baked potato               |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Protein                | Grilled chicken breast     |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit and/or vegetable | Baked apple; green salad   |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Fat                    | Sour cream; salad dressing |

### Snacks

- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Starch  | Whole wheat crackers |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Protein | Peanut butter        |

On the list of snack ideas (page 2), there is a column named "satiety." The "satiety" of a food is an estimate of how long a food will keep us satisfied. Below are approximate satiety measures for different types of foods.

General food category	Satiety
• <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Sweets</u> —sugar, soda, soft drinks, fruit, fruit juice, candy	½ hour
• <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Starches</u> —breads, cereals, corn, potatoes, etc.	2 hours
• <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Starch</u> + <u>Protein</u> —meat, dairy, fish, dry beans, nuts soy, etc.	3 hours
• <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Starch</u> + <u>Protein</u> + <u>Fat</u> —margarine, oil, fried foods, greasy food, fat in food, etc.	4 hours

There is no food on this planet that will give us much more than about 4 hours of satisfaction. That is why we feel our best if we eat every 4 to 6 hours while we are awake!



# Perils of Skipping Meals

## MEAL PLANNER

Below are suggestions for three days of meals. If you do not like the suggested foods, just follow the food category guidelines and put in your own healthy substitutions. These are suggestions and guidelines—not exact rules!

<u>Meal / Food categories</u>	<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Day 2</u>	<u>Day 3</u>
<b><u>Meal 1*</u></b> <input type="checkbox"/> Starch <input type="checkbox"/> Protein <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit (if desired) <input type="checkbox"/> Fat <input type="checkbox"/> Drink	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 slices whole wheat toast <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 eggs <input type="checkbox"/> 1 orange <input type="checkbox"/> 2 tsp tub margarine <input type="checkbox"/> Hot tea	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup oatmeal <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup milk / 2 Tbsp nuts <input type="checkbox"/> 1/2 cup berries <input type="checkbox"/> Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter and banana sandwich on whole wheat bread <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee
<b><u>Meal 2*</u></b> <input type="checkbox"/> Starch <input type="checkbox"/> Protein <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable <input type="checkbox"/> Fat <input type="checkbox"/> Drink	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 slices whole wheat bread <input type="checkbox"/> 2 oz lean meat <input type="checkbox"/> 1 apple <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce and tomato <input type="checkbox"/> Low-fat mayo or salad dressing <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar-free soft drink	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-15 whole-wheat crackers <input type="checkbox"/> 2 oz lean meat or 1/3 cup mixed nuts <input type="checkbox"/> 1 small banana <input type="checkbox"/> Large lettuce and vegetable salad <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable juice	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 slices of pizza <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh fruit <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar-free soft drink
<b><u>Meal 3*</u></b> <input type="checkbox"/> Starch <input type="checkbox"/> Protein <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable <input type="checkbox"/> Fat <input type="checkbox"/> Drink	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium baked potato <input type="checkbox"/> 3 oz skinless oven-fried chicken <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup mixed fruit salad <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup steamed broccoli <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Tbsp tub margarine or low-fat sour cream <input type="checkbox"/> Water	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup cooked rice <input type="checkbox"/> 3 oz lean meat <input type="checkbox"/> 1 baked pear <input type="checkbox"/> 1 1/2 cups green beans <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar-free drink	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup macaroni and cheese <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup mixed fruit <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 cups cooked greens <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Tbsp tub margarine <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar-free drink
<b><u>Snack 1**</u></b> <input type="checkbox"/> Starch <input type="checkbox"/> Protein	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 crackers <input type="checkbox"/> 8 oz sugar-free yogurt	<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2 sandwich	<input type="checkbox"/> 1/3 cup mixed nuts
<b><u>Snack 2**</u></b> <input type="checkbox"/> Starch <input type="checkbox"/> Protein	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 crackers <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Tbsp peanut butter	<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2 cup cereal <input type="checkbox"/> 1 cup skim milk	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 cups low-fat popcorn <input type="checkbox"/> 1 oz cheese

\*Eat when you first notice signs of hunger, or within 2 hours of getting up. After your first meal, time your meals so you eat every 4-6 hours until bedtime.

\*\* Have snacks only if physically hungry. If you can't eat a meal within 4-6 hours, eat a healthy snack.