

Finding the Right Balance: Combining Protein and Carbohydrates for Lasting Energy

Choose meals and snacks that combine protein and carbohydrate for lasting energy. The balance can keep you full longer, help reduce cravings, increase energy, and help keep you from overeating at your next meal. For best results, you should generally **avoid going longer than four hours without eating**, and look for a **minimum of 15-20g of protein** at each meal and **5-10g** at each snack.

CARBOHYDRATE	PROTEIN
<p>Grains and Starches (highest carb):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads, bagels, buns (whole wheat or whole grain) • Tortilla/fajita shells (same) • Pitas (same) • Crackers (choose whole grain, trans fat-free) • Pasta (choose whole grain over white) • Rice (choose brown or wild over white) • Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, etc. • Ancient grains: quinoa, spelt, amaranth, bulgur, etc. • Barley, couscous • Cereals (look for >3 g fibre, <8 g sugar per 30 g svg) • Oats, oatmeal • Cereal/granola bars (look for >3 g fibre, <8 g sugar) • Rice milk <p>Fruits (moderate carb):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruits, frozen fruits • Canned fruits (choose less often; choose those canned in water or juice, rather than syrup) • Dried fruits (no sugar added) • Fruit juice (100% juice with no sugar added) <p>Vegetables (lowest carb):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leafy greens • Fresh vegetables • Frozen vegetables • Canned vegetables (choose less often; choose lower salt/sodium varieties) • Vegetable/tomato juice (choose lower sodium) • Tomato sauce (choose lower sodium) <p>Carbohydrates – Notable exceptions: While still carbohydrates, these foods are high in added sugars, and as a result can cause a quick rise in blood sugar, followed by a crash. They are also low in vitamins, minerals, and fibre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candy • Pop • Syrup/Sugar/Jam/Jelly • Chocolate bars • Donuts, most pastries 	<p>Meats (highest protein):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish (avoid deep-fried) • Shellfish (avoid deep-fried) • Turkey (choose skinless, white, roasted more often) • Chicken (same) • Pork/Ham (choose lean cuts, avoid sausages and processed meats) • Beef (see pork) • Ground beef (choose lean or x-lean), chicken, turkey <p>Dairy and Eggs (moderate protein):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk* • Chocolate milk* • Cheese • Greek Yogurt/Yogurt* (choose plain more often), Kefir • Cottage cheese • Eggs, egg-beaters (egg whites) <p>Nuts and Legumes (variable protein):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanuts, peanut butter • Nuts, nut butters (almonds, walnuts, etc.) • Seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, hemp, chia, etc.) • Beans* (brown, black, kidney, etc.) • Lentils* and other legumes • Chick peas*, hummus • Soy beverage* (aka soy milk; choose plain more often) • Soy nuts (dry-roasted soy beans) • Tofu, tempeh, edamame • Soy and tofu products (e.g. veggie dogs, soygurt, other meatless products) <p>Protein - Notable exceptions: These choices do not have an appreciable amount of protein, and can be very high in saturated fat. Choose them sparingly, and don't consider them a protein source at your meal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream cheese • Ice cream • Sour cream • Bacon • Pepperoni

* Can serve as a protein & a carbohydrate (combination food).

Balanced Snacking Ideas

Snack from home or on the Road

- 100-175 g (1/3-3/4 cup) yogurt and a piece of fruit
- 1-2 oz. cheese and 4-6 whole wheat crackers or 1-3 *Lavash* crackers
- ½-3/4 cup low-fat cottage cheese and ½ cup blueberries, pineapple, etc.
- 1-2 Tbsp. peanut or almond butter with apple, banana, celery, etc.
- 1-2 cups plain milk, chocolate milk or soy beverage
- 1 mini can flavoured tuna or salmon and 4-6 whole grain crackers
- 10-23 almonds and 1 piece of fruit (apple, pear, 1 cup grapes, etc.)
- ¼ cup hummus and ½ cup fresh veggies or ½ whole wheat pita
- 1/3-1 cup whole grain cereal and ½ to 1 cup milk
- 1 hardboiled egg and a slice of toast or ½ cup chopped veggies
- 1-2 Tbsp. peanut/almond butter on whole wheat English muffin
- Banana and milk/soy beverage shake (see **Rapid Snack #1**)
- 1-2 cheese strings or Mini *Babybel* cheese with crackers, fruit, or veggies
- ½ cup plain yogurt and ¼ cup Bran Buds or low-fat granola + berries
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce and ½ cup plain yogurt
- Bean burrito (see **Rapid Snack #2**)
- 1 cup quinoa or couscous salad with chick peas or other beans
- 2-4 slices lean deli meat or leftover meat on ½-1 whole wheat wrap
- ½ cup edamame or chick peas
- 1 cup cooked oatmeal, served with ¾ cup milk or soy beverage
- 1 cup bean, lentil, or meat-based soup (look for at least 5 g protein)
- Cottage cheese, raisins, and sunflower seeds (see **Rapid Snack #3**)
- Energy bar (look for <250 calories, and 7-10 g protein)
- 1 slice toast or English muffin with 1 oz. light cheddar cheese and tomato
- ½ cup chopped veggies, dipped in ½ cup low-fat refried beans
- 1 cup meat or vegetarian chili
- ½ cup bean salad, made with red & white kidney beans, chick peas, and vinaigrette dressing (can buy pre-made)
- ¼ cup trail mix, made with dry-roasted soy beans (see **Rapid Snack #4**), and a piece of fruit
- ½ cup low-fat ricotta cheese and ½ cup raspberries or canned peaches
- ¼ pack of silken tofu with banana and OJ mixed in blender

Fast Food, Cafeteria, or Restaurant Choices

- **Meat or vegetarian chili**
- **Garden salad with grilled chicken, turkey, egg, chick peas, cheese, etc.**
- **Container of cottage cheese, yogurt, milk, or chocolate milk and 1 fruit**
- **Meat or bean-based soup**
- **6" sub on whole-wheat with lean meat, veggies, and mustard**
- **Tuna, chicken, or ham pita or wrap**

Rapid Snack #1 – Frozen Fruit Shakes

- 1 frozen banana (peel and freeze in a Ziploc bag when it turns brown)
- ¼ cup milk or soy beverage
- berries (fresh or frozen) to taste
- splash of orange juice

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until thick. Serve immediately.

Rapid Snack #2 – Refried Bean Burrito

- ½ cup (4-6 generous tbsp) low-fat refried beans (try President's Choice)
- 6" or 12" whole wheat tortilla
- 1 oz. low-fat cheese
- ½ tomato, diced

Combine beans and cheese in a bowl and microwave for 1-2 minutes, until cheese is melted. Spread on ½ of tortilla and add tomato. Fold tortilla and cut into slices. Serve with low-fat sour cream and salsa.

Rapid Snack #3 – PM "Hold Me Over"

- ½ cup low fat cottage cheese
- 2 Tbsp. raisins
- 2 Tbsp. sunflower seeds
- Cinnamon, to taste

Combine all ingredients in a small, re-sealable container. Use, as needed, to curb cravings and hunger, usually mid-afternoon, at work/school/practice/etc.

Rapid Snack #4 – Trail Mix

- 2 parts dry-roasted soy beans
- 1 part raisins
- 1 part bran buds
- 2 parts cereal (e.g. *Shreddies* or *Cheerios*)
- 1 part dry-roasted almonds or sunflower seeds

To reduce calories, include more cereal, and fewer dried fruits and nuts. Dry-roasted soy beans are a good lower-calorie alternative to other nuts. Serving size = ¼ cup (try to portion out individually if you are prone to overeating).

Tips to make Better Snack Options

- For lasting fullness and energy, as well as to reduce cravings and overeating at home, combine protein and carbohydrate foods together at meals and snacks. Each of the snacks above contains both protein and carbs.
- When choosing meats, choose leaner cuts, like chicken, turkey, lean roast beef, or ham. Avoid sausages, salamis, bolognas, or other more highly-processed meats, which are much higher in total fat and saturated fat.
- Reduce your intake of trans fats by choosing fewer foods that contain "partially hydrogenated", or "shortening" in the ingredient list. You'll find these ingredients most commonly in pizzas, crackers, and pastries.
- With grains, look for 100% whole grain or whole wheat