

FOOD FACTS FOR FAMILIES

HE-688

Food Facts & Fun

You make choices every day. For example, you decide how to dress, who your friends are, and what to watch on TV. You also make choices about what you eat.

The earlier you begin to make smart food choices, the better you will feel – not to mention how “nutrific” you will look. You will have more energy to do your school work and more energy during your free time. Your skin will glow, your hair will shine, and your weight will be right on target for your height.

What you eat today will also play a part in what your body will become later in life. For example, teenagers with a high cholesterol level – from foods or genetic makeup – seem to keep it as adults. High cholesterol has been linked to increased risk of heart disease, a leading killer in the U.S. But let’s face it – who’s going to worry about problems they’ll face in 30 to 40 years?

Today you have more pressing problems – how to ace the next test, how to be a better athlete or cheerleader or dancer or band member, or how to get a date with the one of your dreams. Peer acceptance is important, and saying “no” is often difficult. Then, too, you have concerns at home – money or getting along with your parents and other family members.

So why worry about making smarter food choices and exercising more? Because you can be in control. You can make the decisions – at the vending machine, going through the school lunch line, and at the fast food restaurant. You can take responsibility for your own health.

Chart Your Eating Habits

Before you can make smarter food choices, you need to look at your eating pattern. Your eating pattern can give you some important clues. It can show you **what** you eat, **where** you eat, **why** you eat, **when** you eat, and **how** you eat.

Jot down your eating habits for a few days – no cheating. Make sure at least one of your days is a Saturday or Sunday and the others are weekdays. Use this sample as a guide.

After you have kept a record for several days, take a look at your eating pattern. Can you find a problem area? This checklist can help you.

	Yes	No
1. Did you eat while watching TV?	___	___
2. Did you eat when you were bored?	___	___
3. Did you skip meals and then overeat?	___	___
4. Did you eat snacks high in calories?	___	___
5. Did you eat fast food more than once?	___	___
6. Did you drink milk?	___	___
7. Did you eat breakfast?	___	___
8. Did you eat fruit?	___	___
9. Did you eat vegetables?	___	___
10. Did you drink water?	___	___

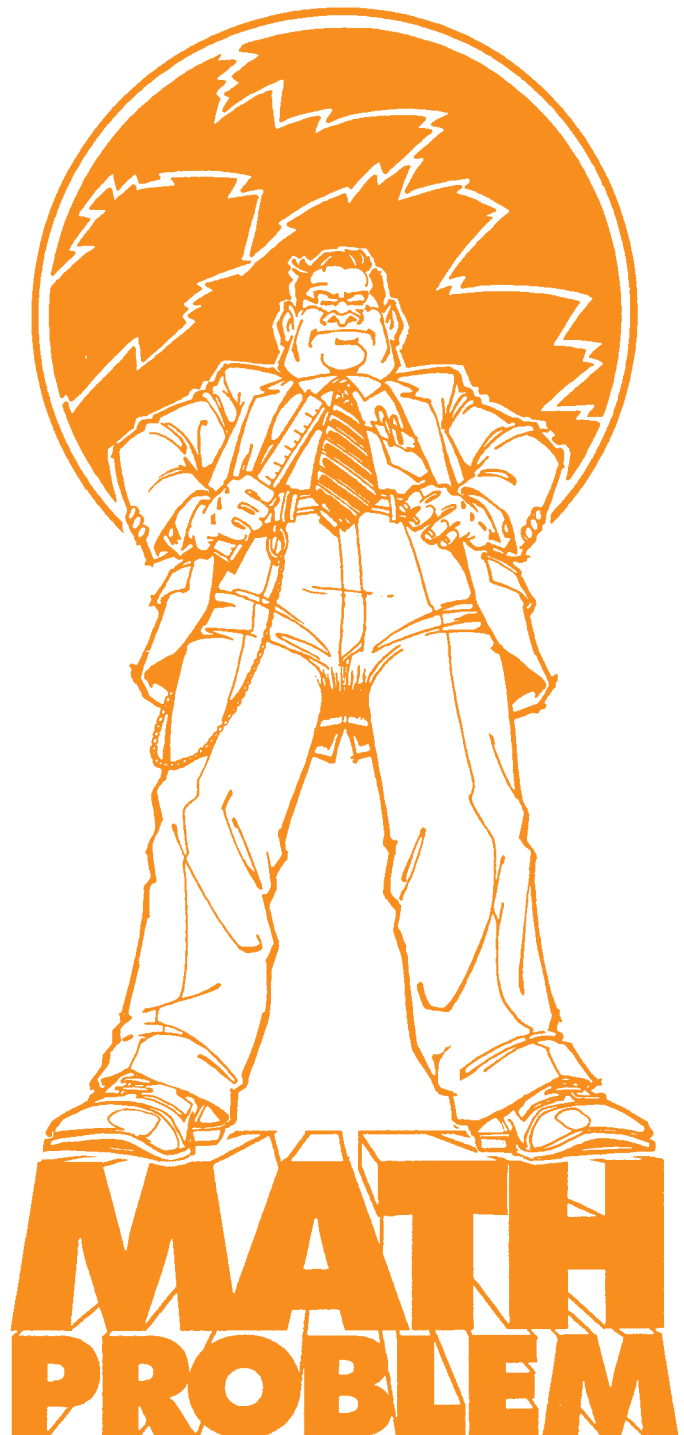
If you answered “no” to questions 1-5 and “yes” to questions 6-10, good for you! If you answered “yes” to any of the first five or “no” to any of the last five, you need to make some changes in your eating habits.

Day of the Week	What Food? How Much?	When? Start/stop	Where? Doing What?	Why?	How hungry? 0-5 scale (0 = not at all hungry, 5 = very hungry)
Tuesday	20 Potato Chips	3:15-3:20 pm	Couch watching TV	Bored	2 (not really hungry)
Tuesday	1 soft drink	3:20-3:30 pm	"	to wash down chips	"



Fact or Fiction?

- Chocolate and french fries cause pimples. Fact or fiction? Fiction. Foods don't cause acne. Your hormones, personal hygiene, and use of facial creams and makeup are more important factors than foods.
- The food groups are meat, bread, and potatoes. Fact or fiction? Fiction. The real food groups are fruits, vegetables, cereals and grains, meat and other protein foods, and milk and dairy products.
- Doughnuts will put on the weight faster than bagels. Fact or fiction? Fact. One doughnut has at least twice the number of calories as a bagel or English muffin. Make smarter food choices and make your calories count.
- Milk is for babies. Fact or fiction? Fiction. Teenagers need four glasses of milk per day or other calcium-rich foods. Worried about weight gain? Go with low-fat milk.
- Eating grapefruit before a meal can help you lose weight. Fact or fiction? Fiction. No food can burn fat.
- Eating a lot of protein builds strong muscles. Fact or fiction? Fiction. Only exercise builds strong muscles.
- Vitamin C is an incredible vanishing vitamin. Fact or fiction? Fact. Vitamin C (or ascorbic acid) just won't stay put. It actually escapes from food, from fruit juices, even from your body. How do you trap the vanishing vitamin? You don't. You just have to keep tanking up on orange juice, potatoes, and other Vitamin C-loaded foods.
- Granola bars are healthful and have few calories. Fact or fiction? Fiction. Don't let the name fool you. Granola isn't too bad, but in order to take the shape of a bar, it has lots of gooey fat and sugar added.
- Fish and chicken are smart food choices. Fact or fiction? Fact. But cooking methods must be smart choices, too. When the fish and chicken are coated in batter and deep-fried, they are loaded with extra, empty calories. Other items such as tartar sauce and mayonnaise add many extra calories, too.

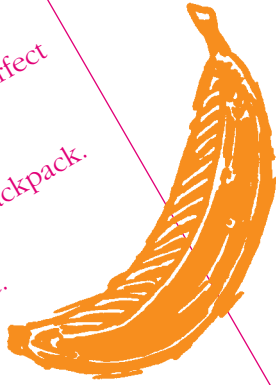


Math problem: The difference in calories between 1 cup of skim milk and 1 cup of whole milk is equivalent to 2 pats of butter. If there are 32 pats of butter in a stick, how many days would it take you to drink the equivalent of a stick of butter in the extra fat found in 4 cups of whole milk per day? Hint: The answer rhymes with “pour.”

(But does this mean you shouldn't drink milk? No. Just drink skim or low-fat milk if you are concerned about your weight.)

Breakfast on the Run

Time to go and no time to eat? Grab some fresh fruit on your way out the door – pears, apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, tangerines.



Think about it – fresh fruit is really the perfect food:

Comes in its own wrapper.

Fits in your purse, pocket, or backpack.

Is pre-sweetened.

Can be eaten with one hand.

Keeps your teeth clean.

Needs no preparation.

Is environmentally friendly.

More grab & go breakfast foods:

Muffins and cookies made with cereal.

Leftover pizza.

Bagels, English muffins.

Celery stuffed with peanut butter.

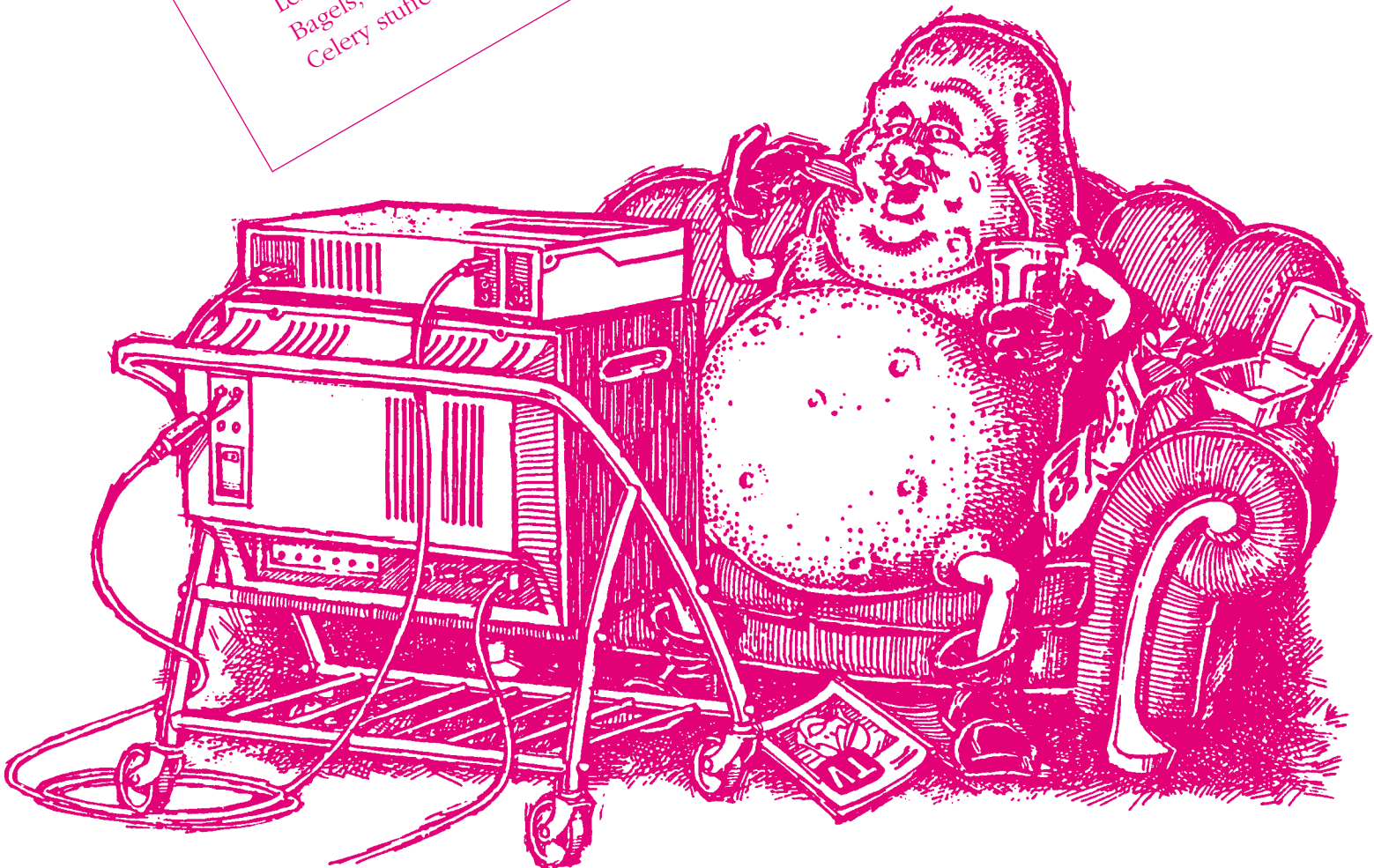
Television and Your Weight

The average American teenager spends 24 hours a week watching television. That's a lot of TV! No wonder the term "couch potato" became popular. And here's a statistic to think about: On average, the more TV a young person watches, the more extra fat he or she will have. Why does it work like that? Think about it. Don't you like to eat while you watch TV?

How can you beat this statistic? One way is obvious. Don't eat every time you are in front of the TV. You can also substitute some of the healthier snacks (keep reading for a list of these).

Another way to beat the statistic is to exercise while you are watching TV. Try jumping jacks, jumping rope, jogging in place, knee bends, push-ups, half sit-ups, or bench aerobics. If your family has an exercise bike, ask if you can move it in front of the TV.

Believe it or not, another way is to watch less TV. If you watch TV each day, decide which program you like least, and turn the TV off when it comes on. Get up and do some physical exercise while that program is on. You may find you enjoy the physical activity so much you forget to come back to watch the next program.



The Sweet Story

Who would eat 10 teaspoons of sugar for breakfast? That's what you're consuming when you have a soft drink for breakfast! Sugar is everywhere. So much is added to foods that an average American eats more than 100 pounds of sugar every year. Check out how many teaspoons of sugar are added to some of your favorite foods.

Food or Beverage	Teaspoons of sugar*
Beverages	
Gatorade (8 oz.)	3.5
Kool-aid, sweetened (8 oz.)	6.0
Soft drink (12 oz.)	10.0
Cereal (1 oz.)	
Cheerios	0.3
Wheaties	0.8
Frosted Mini-Wheats	1.8
Frosted Flakes	2.8
Honey Smacks	4.0
Cakes, candy bars, cookies, and desserts	
Brownies with nut (2-inch square)	2.3
Doughnut, plain	1.8
Doughnut, chocolate-covered	2.3
Graham crackers (2 large)	0.9
Granola cluster (1)	4.0
Jello (½ cup)	4.1
Milk chocolate with almonds (1 oz.)	3.2
Oatmeal raisin cookies (2)	1.7
Pop-tart	4.5
Sherbet (½ cup)	7.6
Twinkies (1)	4.8
Yellow cake with icing (2-inch square)	7.9
Condiments	
Table sugar (1 tsp.)	1.0
Chocolate fudge topping (1 tbsp.)	2.1
Pancake syrup (1 tbsp.)	3.8
Dairy products	
Vanilla ice milk (½ cup)	2.7
Ice cream sandwich (3 oz.)	3.8
Ice cream soda (10 oz.)	6.0
Thick shake (11 oz.)	9.6
Fruits and vegetables (½ cup)	
Cream-style corn, canned	1.5
Peaches, light syrup, canned	2.3
Peaches, heavy syrup, canned	4.0
Other foods	
Peanut butter (2 tbsp.)	1.3
Pork & beans (½ cup)	2.4

* Average values.

Sweet, Sinful, Or Salty...

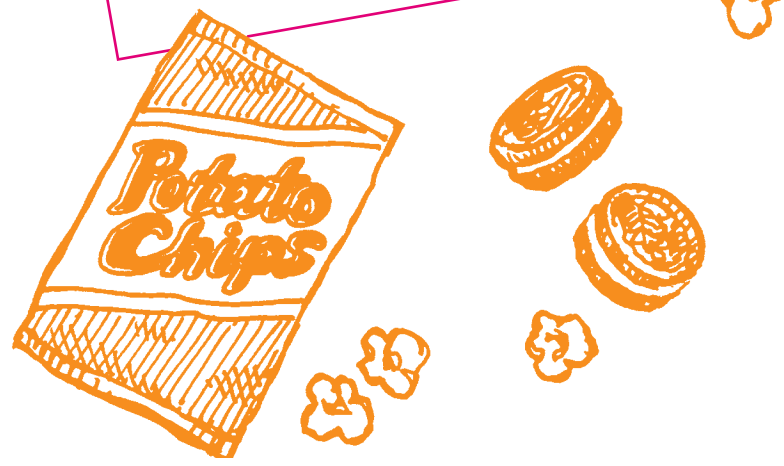
Calories add up fast from sugar and fat. Check out those in "The Sweet & Sinful." Although salt doesn't have calories, all foods having salt have calories. Instead of "The Salty," you might want to try pepper or a salt-free herb seasoning.



The Sweet & Sinful	
Calories	Amount
96	Malted milk balls (10)
99	Jelly beans (15)
98	Gum drops (6 small)
100	Chocolate kisses (4)
70	Peanut Butter Cups (2, bite-size)
99	Peanut M&M's (9)
100	Plain M&M's (25)
100	Milky Way snack bar (1)
92	Mounds (1, bite-size)
61	Peppermint Patty (1, bite-size)
100	Chocolate chip cookies (2)
65	Chewy Chips Ahoy Cookie (1)
94	Oreos (2)
70	Double Stuff Oreo (1)



The Salty	
83	Popcorn (1½ cup, popped in oil)
90	Potato chips (8)
46	Pretzel sticks (20, thin)



From the table below, check the smarter food choice in each row. (The smarter choice has fewer calories – usually from fat but sometimes from sugar.) The answers are given after the table.

<input type="checkbox"/> Ice cream	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice milk
<input type="checkbox"/> Mozzarella cheese	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheddar cheese
<input type="checkbox"/> Vanilla milkshake	<input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate milkshake
<input type="checkbox"/> Almonds	<input type="checkbox"/> Cashews
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna canned in oil	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuna canned in water
<input type="checkbox"/> Hamburger patty	<input type="checkbox"/> Bacon
<input type="checkbox"/> Granola bar	<input type="checkbox"/> Granola cereal
<input type="checkbox"/> Corn chips	<input type="checkbox"/> Pretzels
<input type="checkbox"/> Biscuit	<input type="checkbox"/> English muffin
<input type="checkbox"/> Graham crackers	<input type="checkbox"/> Snack crackers
<input type="checkbox"/> Biscuit	<input type="checkbox"/> Croissant
<input type="checkbox"/> Sweet roll	<input type="checkbox"/> Pancake
<input type="checkbox"/> Oatmeal raisin cookie	<input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate cookie
<input type="checkbox"/> Frosted Mini Wheats	<input type="checkbox"/> Frosted Flakes
<input type="checkbox"/> Sour cream	<input type="checkbox"/> Butter
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheeseburger	<input type="checkbox"/> Specialty burger
<input type="checkbox"/> Vanilla Wafers	<input type="checkbox"/> Doughnut
<input type="checkbox"/> Pecan pie	<input type="checkbox"/> Apple pie
<input type="checkbox"/> Angel food cake	<input type="checkbox"/> Pound cake
<input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate kisses	<input type="checkbox"/> Jelly beans
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheese puffs	<input type="checkbox"/> Pretzels
<input type="checkbox"/> Corn flakes	<input type="checkbox"/> Granola cereal
<input type="checkbox"/> Biscuit	<input type="checkbox"/> Cornbread

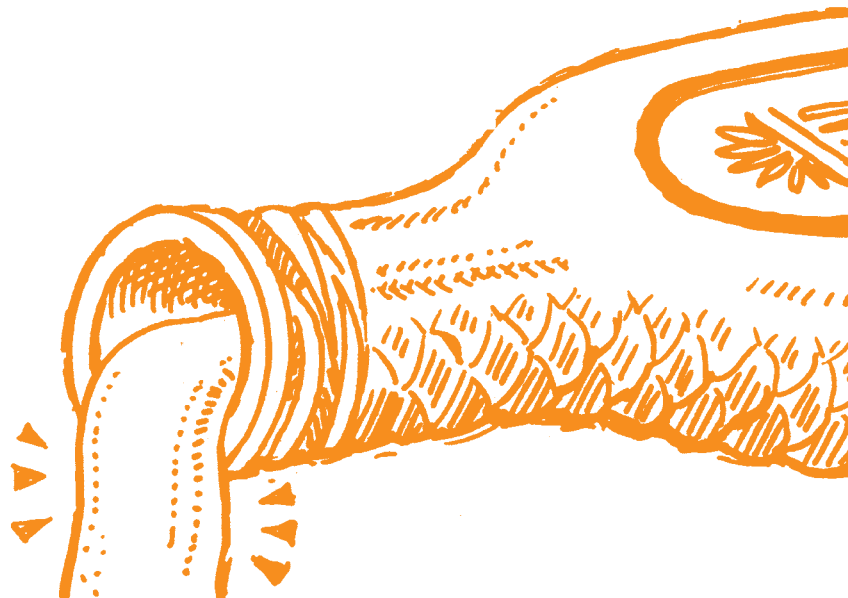
Answers: ice milk, mozzarella cheese, vanilla milkshake, almonds, tuna canned in water, hamburger patty, granola cereal, pretzels, English muffin, graham crackers, biscuit, pancake, oatmeal raisin cookie, Frosted Mini Wheats, sour cream, cheeseburger, Vanilla Wafers, apple pie, angel food cake, jelly beans, pretzels, corn flakes, cornbread.

Salad Alert

Lettuce and other vegetables are low in calories, but foods you add to them aren't. Salad dressings have about 100 calories a tablespoon. (And who uses just 1 tablespoon?) Bacon bits and olives add calories fast, too.

One tablespoon of the following "extras" gives you this many extra calories:

Extras	Calories
Bacon bits, imitation	30
Cheese, grated	25
Olives, chopped	20
Salad dressing	100
Sunflower seeds	50



How many fat calories are there in other vending machine foods?



Peanut Butter Cups
(6 miniatures),
260 calories
15 grams fat.

Pretzels
(30 sticks),
30 calories,
trace
of fat.

Corn chips
(1 ounce,
snack pack),
155 calories,
9 grams fat.

Popcorn
(3 cups
popped in oil),
160 calories,
9 grams fat.

Popcorn
(3 cups,
air popped),
90 calories,
trace of fat.

Answers (approximate percentages): Peanut Butter Cups, 52% fat calories. Pretzels, only a trace of fat calories. (You can't use the formula on a "trace.") Corn chips, 52% fat calories. Popcorn (popped in oil), 51% fat calories. Popcorn (air popped), only a trace of fat calories.

Vending Machines

You can find some good nutrition buys in vending machines, but shop around. For example, crackers stuffed with peanut butter or cheese both have about the same number of calories. But one of these has fewer calories from fat, which is what you should be looking for.

Become a label detective. Find foods that taste good but have fewer calories from fat. Check out the labels below and then follow the example to determine fat calories in the crackers. Your best bet is to select low-fat snacks – ones that have less than 30 to 40 percent calories from fat.

One package of each of these crackers contains the following:

	Toasty Peanut Butter Crackers	Creamy Cheese Crackers
Calories	190	200
Protein	5 grams	6 grams
Carbohydrates	24 grams	21 grams
Fat	8 grams	11 grams

Here's how you find what percentage of a food comes from fat:

Step 1: Grams of fat in 1 serving x 9 = calories from fat in one serving.

Step 2: Calories from fat divided by total calories in 1 serving x 100 = percent of calories from fat.



Calories from fat in **toasty peanut butter crackers:**

Step 1: 8 grams fat x 9 = 72 calories from fat.

Step 2: 72 calories divided by 190 calories x 100 = about 38% calories from fat.



Calories from fat in **creamy cheese crackers:**

Step 1: 11 grams fat x 9 = 99 calories from fat.

Step 2: 99 calories divided by 200 calories x 100 = about 50% calories from fat.

Creative Snacking

Can you snack and still eat smart? Yes. You can make your snacks part of an overall healthy eating plan. What's the taste and texture you're craving? Here are some snacks to fit your food moods:

Crunchy:

Raw vegetables
Bread sticks
Toasted bagel halves or English muffin
Low-sugar cereal

Smooth/Creamy:

Skim milk
Low-fat yogurt
Applesauce

Sweet:

Banana bread
Graham crackers
Cracker Jacks
Animal crackers
Fruit cocktail
Popsicle
Strawberries
Flavored sparkling water

Salty:

Saltine crackers
Pretzels
Popcorn
Dill pickle
Soup



Fiber, The Filler-Upper

It usually takes you longer to eat fibery foods than meats and dairy products. Although you spend more time eating, you actually eat fewer calories with fibery foods. This is a great way to fill up but still stay trim.

Fibery foods also help your digestive system and keep you regular.

Fiber is found in:

All fruits and vegetables.
All cereal and grain foods.
All starchy foods, such as potatoes and beans.

Fiber isn't found in:

Any meat, fish, or eggs.
Any dairy foods, such as milk or cheese.

The Point Is...

Eating can be fun and healthy, too. If you start making wise food choices now, you're doing your future self – the person you're becoming – a big favor. So, assert your independence. Choose healthy foods. Your future self will thank you for it!

Barbara Struempler, *Extension Nutritionist*, Professor, Nutrition and Food Science, Auburn University

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