

Nighttime snacking best bets

Calorie-conscious individuals may wonder if eating at night or after a certain time can derail their diets and fitness regimens.

The jury is still out on whether eating at night can pack on the pounds or not, with various health recommendations contradicting one another. However, if one does choose to snack at night, there may be a smart way to do so.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Weight Control Information Network says that a calorie is a calorie no matter when it is consumed. That means it doesn’t matter if calories are consumed in the morning, afternoon or evening. It is how many are consumed and the amount of physical activity individuals perform that will affect their weights. Conversely, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics says they’re not sure if a calorie is a calorie no

matter when it is consumed. Their research and data from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine’s Center for Weight and Eating Disorders indicates that when food is consumed late at night the body is more likely to store those calories as fat and gain weight rather than burn it off as energy. Certain animal studies show that food is processed differently depending on the time of day it was consumed.

But what is a person to do when hunger pangs hit at night and one fears that their rumbling stomach may interrupt their sleep? According to the nutrition and fitness experts at MyFitnessPal, powered by Under Armour, stick to a snack that is between 100 and 200 calories. Choose a food that is high in protein, fiber or healthy fats, which will be more likely to keep a person satiated throughout the night. Apples and peanut

butter, string cheese and fruit, or whole grain crackers and Greek yogurt can be healthy, satisfying nighttime snacks. Avoid sugary, calorie-dense foods, which may be hard to digest and can compromise sleep quality.

More studies may be necessary to determine the relationship between body weight and snacking at night. In the meantime, nighttime snackers should choose healthy foods when reaching for a late night bite to eat.



Fasting for weight loss and better health

Intermediate fasting plans are among today’s most popular diets.

Many people embrace fasting as an effective way to shed pounds, reduce risk for various weight-related illnesses and improve overall health.

Interest in intermediate fasting is growing, and experts offer varying opinions about the best and safest ways to make the most of this diet strategy.

Fasting comes in various forms. With the 5:2 fast, for example, individuals follow a traditional diet for five days of the week. The remaining two days are fast days. Those fast days allow only water as sustenance, but often include caloric intake that does not exceed 500 to 600 calories.

Alternate-day fasting is another option, with one day of having normal caloric intake, followed by the next with the 500-calorie limit; rinse and repeat.

Other fasting plans involve timed eating. With the 16:8 diet, people eat whatever they like within a predetermined window of time, typically between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. They then fast for the remaining 16. A study published in the journal Nutrition and Health Aging and led by Krista Varady, an associate professor of kinesiology and nutrition at the University of Illinois at Chicago, found the 16:8 diet a successful way for obese individuals to lose weight. The study also found that

this diet helped to lower blood pressure in participating individuals. On average, when compared with the control trial, those on the 16:8 diet consumed 350 fewer calories and lost 3 percent of their weight. In addition, their blood pressure dropped by an average of seven millimeters of mercury over the length of the study.

In addition to weight loss and improved blood chemistry metrics, fasting may also improve longevity, suggest researchers. An ongoing study by the National Institute on Aging conducted on rhesus monkeys, which share 93 of their genetic makeup with humans, found calorie-restriction diets helped certain

monkeys live anywhere from 14 to 17 years longer in captivity. Restricting calories may activate genes that direct cells to preserve resources and stall out instead of grow. In this state, the cells are resistant to stress and illness.

It can take some time for people to find a fasting plan that works for them. Before the body becomes acclimated to fasting, headaches, hunger pangs, low energy, and mood swings may occur. Eating high-fiber foods can help a person feel fuller longer. Consuming plenty of water also can help. Always consult with a doctor before beginning a new diet regimen.

Office in Brownwood

Chris McClish, M.D.
Interventional Cardiology

Hendrick Medican Center is pleased to announce that Chris McClish, M.D., has office hours the first and third Tuesdays of each month in Brownwood. Dr. McClish is an interventional cardiologist at Cardiology Consultants in Abilene. He earned his medical degree at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and completed his residency, internship and cardiology fellowship at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. He also completed a Fellowship in Interventional Cardiology at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

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