

snackattack

Tired? Stressed? Cranky? There's a snack for that. To help you eat smart, top nutritionists suggest the best noshes for all the hungry moments you and your kids face.

BY ALICE OGLETHORPE | PHOTOS BLAINE MOATS | FOOD STYLING GREG LUNA

FOR YOU

Your head is throbbing, and your stomach is growling.

WHAT YOU NEED "Magnesium helps relax blood vessels, which can help relieve tension and pain," says Keri Glassman, R.D., author of *The Snack Factor Diet*.

BEST BITES Sweet potatoes are a great source of this mineral, so you can eat one cooked, or try making your own baked sweet potato chips: Cut a potato into thin slices, drizzle with 1 tsp. olive oil, sprinkle with sea salt, and bake at 250°F for 2 hours, flipping once. No time for that? Try a bowl of magnesium-rich bran flakes with inflammation-calming blueberries, which are high in potassium.



You'll be eating a late dinner, but you're hungry now.

WHAT YOU NEED "Water-dense foods will fill you up and curb your appetite, and protein will keep that feeling going until dinner," Glassman says.

BEST BITES Try crunching on celery sticks dipped in hummus, or roasted red peppers with mozzarella and basil. A few endive leaves topped with tuna salad will do the trick, too.



You tossed and turned all night, and have a meeting that will run into lunch.

WHAT YOU NEED After a healthy breakfast of whole-grain carbs and protein, make sure you have a midmorning snack. Coffee's the obvious perk-up, and we give you permission to grab a second or third mug (research shows that coffee hydrates you almost as well as water). Just pair it with food that has fiber and healthy fats, Glassman says. "This will give you a steady flow of energy and help you stay satisfied until you can break for lunch," she says.

BEST BITES Have five or six whole grain crackers with at least 3g fiber per serving topped with 1 Tbsp. natural peanut butter. More options: whole wheat toast topped with a sliced avocado, or a small handful of nuts (about 15).



It's 3 p.m. and your eyelids are heavy, but a nap isn't in the cards.

WHAT YOU NEED "Vitamin C-rich foods will give you the quick energy boost you need until it's quitting time," says Dana James, C.D.N., a nutritional therapist and owner of Food Coach NYC.

BEST BITES Have a cup of sliced papaya with a squeeze of lime juice for an extra dose of C. Other C-rich options include strawberries or a snack mix of chopped dried apricots and coconut flakes.

You can't sleep because your mind is racing.

WHAT YOU NEED "Magnesium is a natural relaxant that encourages a deeper level of sleep," James says.

BEST BITES Drink a glass of warmed almond milk (almonds give it the magnesium), with a few dashes of cinnamon. Or try half a banana drizzled with honey.



You're giving a big presentation in half an hour and feel drained.

WHAT YOU NEED B vitamins will help keep your memory sharp, and zinc enhances mental clarity.

BEST BITES Enjoy a small spinach side salad with pumpkin seeds, which, like most nuts and seeds, are loaded with zinc; it's nice and light, so you won't get sluggish. You can also snack on B-rich pear slices dipped in tahini (a sesame paste you can find in the ethnic aisle of your grocery store) or sesame crackers with guacamole.

FOR YOUR KIDS

It's test day at school: Brainpower, please!

WHAT THEY NEED Back to B vitamins; they boost memory and can also help reduce stress and anxiety, says Brooke Alpert, R.D., author of *The Sugar Detox*. Add foods with the amino acid choline—which aids alertness—and you've got a winning team.

BEST BITES Coconut water will hydrate while supplying the B vitamins; appleslices dipped in natural peanut butter serve up the choline. Other packables include a bottled kefir smoothie (a yogurtlike drink found in the dairy aisle), or some turkey and low-fat Swiss cheese roll-ups.



The school play doesn't end until 10 p.m. How about a before-bed nibble?

WHAT THEY NEED "Whole grain carbs are perfect because they're high in fiber—which kids always need more of—and they also raise levels of sleep-inducing tryptophan in your body," says Lisa DeFazio, R.D.

BEST BITES A bowl of low-sugar cereal with low-fat milk and sliced banana is nutritious but won't sit like a log in your stomach. More good eats include a whole grain waffle with part-skim ricotta and a little strawberry jam, or a bowl of oatmeal with 1 tsp. maple syrup and a splash of 2 percent milk.



SALAD SMARTS

STICK WITH 1–2 TBSP. REGULAR DRESSING. THE FAT HELPS YOUR BODY ABSORB THE NUTRIENTS FROM THE GREENS.

You're getting ready to head to a birthday party, and a seriously un-fun mood is in the house.

WHAT THEY NEED "Low blood sugar, fatigue, and hunger all can cause the crankies," says Samantha Heller, R.D. "A snack that combines carbohydrates and protein will give a steady release of energy and get the good mood vibes going." Choose one that's rich in fiber and includes some healthy fat, and kids will stay full longer and are less likely to gorge on the cake and candy.

BEST BITES Try mixing plain or vanilla Greek yogurt with berries and your child's favorite nuts. More mood-boosting and junk-food curbing choices: peanut butter and raisins on celery, fruit skewers with a DIY yogurt dip (nonfat plain Greek yogurt blended with a little vanilla extract, honey, and chopped strawberries), or a yogurt smoothie (nonfat plain Greek yogurt, unsweetened soy milk, fruit, a dash of honey, and a sprinkle of cinnamon).



You're taking a long car trip.

WHAT THEY NEED "Choose what I call 'activity foods' that are nutritious and will keep your kids occupied because they take longer to eat," says Lauren Slayton, R.D., author of *The Little Book of Thin*.

BEST BITES Pistachios, clementines, and edamame in the shell (you can buy it presteamed) all fill the bill—and are a healthy mix of carbohydrates and fiber, so they'll stop stomachs from growling. Another excellent option: sliced veggies with 1-2 Tbsp. dressing or hummus for dipping.

An afternoon of homework is looming.

WHAT THEY NEED "Omega-3 fats aren't just good for heart-health benefits; they also calm the mind and improve focus," James says.

BEST BITES Flaxseeds are loaded with omega-3s, and flaxseed crackers (we like the Back to Nature brand) drizzled with a few teaspoons of honey are a kid-friendly way to go. You can also try an omega-3-enriched hard-cooked egg (the hens are fed flaxseed, which boosts the omega-3 content).



The big soccer game is close to dinnertime.

WHAT THEY NEED "Keep kids hydrated with a drink that has potassium and electrolytes," DeFazio says. "Then offer a protein-carb combo to keep their energy up without weighing them down." Fruit can also give an instant power surge. "Most fruit is high in water, which will help on the hydration front as well," Glassman says.

BEST BITES Before the game, offer 8 oz. of a sports drink, string cheese, and whole grain crackers. Oranges sliced into quarters are an easy halftime snack, but you can also go with mango, grapes, pear, apple, watermelon, or honeydew. And don't forget the fat-free chocolate milk on the car ride home. Research shows it helps muscles recover.



Raising the nutrition bar

One rule for this on-the-go solution: The fewer—and fresher—the ingredients, the better. These seven make the short list.



◀ You can clearly see that **KIND BARS** are a good choice just by looking at the bar and seeing what's in it. (Yes, those are whole almonds, peanuts, and cranberries.) Keep in mind that a chocolate or yogurt coating adds calories.



◀ The ingredients in **CLIF KIT'S ORGANIC BARS** couldn't be fresher. This bar has dates, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, almonds, sea salt, vanilla beans, lemon juice, and rosemary.



◀ **PROBAR** makes only all-organic bars, and its Fuel line has 3 g protein and 160 calories per bar.



◀ Chia seeds are one of those superfoods you hear a lot about but don't know how to actually eat. **HEALTHWARRIOR CHIA BARS** are loaded with omega-3s, protein, and fiber for about 100 calories.



◀ **ZING BARS** are great for those with food sensitivities because they're gluten- and soy-free. And with high-quality ingredients like orange zest and cashew butter, how could they not taste good?



◀ Grab a **LÄRABAR** for a guilt-free bite. It never has more than nine ingredients and gets its sweetness from dates instead of refined sugar.



◀ **RISE BREAKFAST BARS** contain the right amount of protein and fiber to sub for a light morning meal. Just pair with a glass of 2 percent or almond milk, or lowfat plain Greek yogurt, and you're good to go. ■