

33 Yummy & Healthy Prenatal Snacks

**Curb cravings
& nourish your body**



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As you probably already know, healthy eating is more important than ever during pregnancy.

You want to eat foods that help grow a healthy baby, but you don't want to deprive yourself of yummy food. And... you might be worried about snacking on the right foods to prevent gaining a ton of weight.

Believe it or not, you have more control over this than you realize and it starts with your food choices.

One thing I realized in my years working as a prenatal nutritionist and diabetes educator is that the same snacks that helped my clients with gestational diabetes control their blood sugar were the ones that helped curb cravings for junk food (that can get really strong while you're pregnant!).

So, the snacks featured in this guide are gonna be your best friend, no matter what you're going through in this pregnancy.

Let's start with some basics about *why* the snacks in here help you:

- fight cravings before they start
- keep you full for a long time
- don't raise your blood sugar too much
- prevent you from gaining a ton of weight

All the snacks in this guide have a balance of **fat-to-protein-to-carbohydrates**. Each of these nutrients fuel your body differently.

Foods that have *carbohydrates* raise the blood sugar the most, while protein and fat stabilize your blood sugar. Carbs are quickly broken down into sugar in your body, which is why when you eat a lot of them, your blood sugar goes up.

They are also the foods that trigger cravings, particularly for sweets and junk food, because once your body has processed the carbs your blood sugar plummets quickly and sends your body the signal to **EAT MORE FOOD. *Like, now!***

That's why diets high in carbs are linked to excess weight gain in pregnancy.

So, these snacks are intentionally low in carbs.

Carbs are found in highest amounts in:

- grains (bread, pasta, crackers, etc), beans/legumes, starchy veggies (like potatoes, peas, corn, sweet potatoes + winter squash)
- milk and yogurt (but not cheese, cream, or butter)
- fruit
- anything that contains sugar, even natural sugar like honey

Higher fiber carbohydrates, such as whole grains and beans, might raise your blood sugar a little slower than processed carbs, but they *still raise your sugar*, so be careful with how much you eat at one time.

Always eat carbohydrates with **protein and fat** to prevent your blood sugar from rising too fast and to keep you full for longer. The following snacks follow the above principles and will keep you satisfied between meals. They're likely a little more gourmet than that boring handout you got from the doctor. (*bonus points!*)

As always, it's important to listen to your body and always eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full.

That's why most of these snacks don't have specific serving sizes, with the exception of the high carbohydrate foods. I recommend 15g or less of carbohydrates per snack.

Now go forth and snack with confidence!

Low Carb Snack Ideas: (barely raise the blood sugar, if at all)

- Nuts - any kind (almonds, cashews, walnuts, pecans, etc.)
- 1/2 c plain Greek yogurt + 1/4 c berries (may use stevia to sweeten)
- Beef or turkey jerky (look for one without MSG)
- Cheddar, jack, or string cheese
- 1/4 c blueberries or strawberries with unsweetened whipped cream
- Guacamole + fresh celery and bell pepper
- Small salad with pine nuts, balsamic dressing, and goat cheese
- Hard boiled egg + salt and pepper
- Cherry tomatoes, mozzarella, fresh basil, olive oil + vinegar
- Olives and dill pickles
- 1/2 avocado with salt, pepper, and lemon juice
- Grilled chicken breast with pesto and Parmesan cheese
- Roasted curried cauliflower with coconut milk + cashews
- Celery sticks with peanut butter or almond butter (choose a peanut butter without added sugar)
- 1 oz dark chocolate + nuts (75% cacao or more. *Really* dark!)
- Grass-fed beef burger with cheese served over a green salad
- Sautéed kale with real bacon
- 1/4 cup raspberries + ricotta or cottage cheese (stevia to sweeten)
- Unsweetened almond or coconut milk

Moderate Carb Snack Ideas: (raise the blood sugar a little)

- 1/2 cup homemade sweet potato fries + grilled chicken
- Quesadilla – 1 small organic corn tortilla + cheese + avocado + salsa/cilantro, full-fat sour cream
- Taco – 1 small organic corn tortilla + chicken, beef, fish, or shrimp + lettuce/cabbage, salsa, full-fat sour cream
- 1/2 cup beans or lentils + cheese
- Whole grain crackers with cheese, peanut butter, or sardines
- Apple + small handful of almonds or string cheese
- 1/2 Banana + peanut butter
- 1/2 cup fresh pineapple + cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup fruited/flavored Greek yogurt
- 1 cup milk + small handful of almonds
- 1/2 cup Hummus + feta cheese (pasteurized) + celery/carrot sticks
- 1/2 peanut butter sandwich on sprouted whole grain bread
- 1/2 sandwich with turkey or cheese (+ mustard, lettuce, tomato...)
- Smoothie: 1/4 c berries, 1/2 c plain Greek yogurt, 1 cup unsweetened almond milk. Stevia or vanilla extract to taste. (bonus points for adding 1 Tbsp chia seeds!)

Please note this information is not medical advice, nor is it meant to replace the advice of your doctor or dietitian and I assume no liability for the use or misuse of this information.

About the Author



LILY NICHOLS

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Hey, mama! I'm Lily Nichols, the creator of this handout on healthy pregnancy snacks. I help expecting moms have healthy, happy babies by teaching them the best nutrient-dense foods for a smooth, easy pregnancy. As a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist and Certified Diabetes Educator (and a mom!), I know how challenging pregnancy and postpartum can be... and how much of a difference real food can make. Going through pregnancy with good nutrition and the right support can make all the difference!

Professional Bio

Lily Nichols is a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist, Certified Diabetes Educator, researcher, and author with a passion for evidence-based prenatal nutrition and exercise. Drawing from the current scientific literature and the wisdom of traditional cultures, her work is known for being research-focused, thorough, and sensible. Her bestselling book, *Real Food for Gestational Diabetes* (and online course of the same name), presents a revolutionary nutrient-dense, lower carb diet for managing gestational diabetes. Her unique approach has not only helped tens of thousands of women manage their gestational diabetes (most without the need for blood sugar-lowering medication), but has also influenced nutrition policies internationally.

Lily's second book, *Real Food for Pregnancy*, outlines the gap between current prenatal nutrition guidelines and what's optimal for mother and baby. It includes over 930 citations that support a real food diet during pregnancy and postpartum.

You can learn more from Lily at www.LilyNicholsRDN.com

For more on prenatal nutrition, see Lily's two books: *Real Food for Pregnancy* and *Real Food for Gestational Diabetes*, available on Amazon and anywhere books are sold.



"I'm so thrilled to read *Real Food for Pregnancy*. I absolutely love Lily's work. Her evidence-based approach to nutrition is not only relevant during pregnancy, but for the rest of your life! I think every birth professional (midwife, doula, etc.) should have a copy in their lending library for clients."

Rebecca Dekker, PhD, RN, Founder of Evidence Based Birth®



"Whenever I need cutting edge, evidenced-based prenatal nutrition information, Lily is the first and last expert I go to. She's basically a human encyclopedia of all things pregnancy nutrition related."

Jessica Jones, MS, RD, CDE

