

# Healthy Snacking at the Office

by Barbara Mendez, R PH



Many of my clients complain that the office is the hardest place to maintain their commitment to healthy eating. Often there is a co-worker or two that keeps a bowl full of Hershey's Kisses or M&M's that become totally irresistible around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. This is one of the greatest challenges for eating well; what to do at the office.

It seems that in a company full of people someone is always celebrating their birthday or retiring or doing any such thing that would prompt Human Resources to buy a cake in order to celebrate. The bigger the company, the more celebrations.

Like any celebration, office celebrations, for many people, are an excuse to give up their intentions for a healthier lifestyle. And I am here to tell you; yes, that is true. But it doesn't have to be. We live in a society where on-the-run food is a staple of the American diet. Office celebrations are just one aspect of mindless eating. The only way to seriously defend yourself from the natural

inclination of wanting to indulge, is to have your own stash. Keep your own supply of snacks in the office that you can turn to when you feel hungry or tired or while everyone else is nibbling on cake that they will regret later. Having readily available healthy snacks have been proven to defend against mindless eating.

In an effort to help you close this gap, I offer a list of healthy snack options that I keep in my own office. They may not be Hershey's Kisses, but they definitely do the trick~

**RICE CAKES:** I prefer the Lundberg Brand. They are organic and high in fiber. Great with almond butter for a snack or as part of a quick meal.

**ALMOND BUTTER:** Perfect accompaniment to rice cakes or a sliced apple if you are feeling the craving for something sweet. Almond butter is great for lowering total cholesterol while raising your HDL, beneficial cholesterol. Also has cancer fighting properties.

**BABY CARROTS:** Great for a quick, grounding snack. Try it instead of sugar or sugary snacks to help alleviate stress and boost energy levels. Loaded in carotenoids that benefit the immune system and cardiovascular health.

**HUMMUS:** Good source of protein if you feel like you need something more substantial. Scoop some up with carrot sticks, or for a heartier snack, spread some on a rice cracker. For extra folic acid, get the black bean version.

**NUTS AND SEEDS:** Trader Joe's sells large bags of pre-measured almonds that are perfect for a snack when you need a quick pick-me-up. As many of you may have noticed on your own, nuts are easy to keep eating. We rarely, when left to our own judgment, eat the appropriate serving size which is approximately 15 almonds. The pre-measured packets take the guess work

and will-power out of it. If that is not available for you, then perhaps consider creating your own packets of pre-measured nuts so they are available when you need them.

**WEEKLY SUPPLY OF FRUIT:** Definitely useful when you are hungry and need something quick. Bring enough for the week and make it your intention to have a piece every day.

**WATER:** Sometimes thirst masquerades as hunger. Make sure you are adequately hydrated to ward off hunger pains. Getting enough water also boosts resting metabolic weight, which facilitates weight loss.

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