

# Lesson 1: Track Your Snack

# Lesson 1: Track Your Snack

## Time Required

Estimated lesson timing is 40-60 minutes; however, this lesson can be expanded or shortened, as needed. We encourage you to tailor it to fit within the available class time. If time is limited, we recommend focusing on the Getting Started, Teaching Instructions and Reflections sections.

## Audience

High school students grades 9-12

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, your students will learn about what makes a healthy snack, including information about total calories, added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium (salt). SuperTracker's Food-A-Pedia feature is a quick-and-easy search tool that allows you to look up and compare the nutrition information for foods. Food-A-Pedia can be used without an account and is a good starting place for those new to the SuperTracker application. Choosing healthy snacks is an example of a small step students can take to begin working toward an overall healthy eating pattern. Students will complete the *Track Your Snack* handout to reflect on what they've learned and discover the nutrition content of their favorite snack foods.

## Getting Started

- **Why is this lesson important?** Snacking is an important part of teens' overall food consumption patterns. According to the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, snacking by teens has increased markedly in recent decades, and snacks provide an average of 23 percent of teens' daily calorie intake. Typical snacks are also often high in added sugars, sodium (salt), and saturated fats.
- **What can you do about it?** It is critical that teens take snacking into account when considering what and how much to eat. Snacking is often a mindless activity, and your students may not even realize how much of their food intake comes from snacking. Frame this lesson as an opportunity to have your students think about their current snacking patterns and understand how to incorporate healthier options into this part of their diet.



While not a required part of each lesson, consider using instructional time to get your students up and moving! Take 5 minutes at the beginning of each class to have students stand up from their desks and do a few movements and stretches to get their mind and body ready to learn. Do the following exercises for 30 seconds each:

- Reach for the sky
- Touch your toes

- Arm circles
- Neck circles
- Shoulder rolls
- Jumping with “invisible jump rope”
- Walking lunges back and forth across the room
- Do windmills with your arms
- Chair squats

## Teacher’s Lesson Preparation

<b>SuperTracker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the Food-A-Pedia site tour video, Getting Started: How to Use Food-A-Pedia, on YouTube. Link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EZI-Zfhd78&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EZI-Zfhd78&amp;feature=youtu.be</a></li> <li>• Review navigation of the SuperTracker website. Link: <a href="https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx">https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx</a></li> <li>• Familiarize yourself with the Food-A-Pedia feature. Link: <a href="https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/foodapedia.aspx">https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/foodapedia.aspx</a></li> </ul>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track Your Snack handout (found at the end of this lesson), copies made for each student.</li> <li>• MyPlate MyWins Hacking Your Snack and Videos Link: <a href="https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate-mywins-tips-hacking-your-snacks">https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate-mywins-tips-hacking-your-snacks</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8wgGeKVh_7d4x7icBCNj99MsachAACHi">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8wgGeKVh_7d4x7icBCNj99MsachAACHi</a></li> </ul>
<b>Setup</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computers with Internet access for each student in your classroom; if not available, then arrange for another location, such as a library or a computer lab, with internet access.</li> <li>• Screen and projector.</li> </ul>

## Lesson Objectives

Following this lesson, your students should be able to:

1. Summarize why healthy snacking is important.
2. Choose healthier snacks based on their nutritional content (calories, added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium).
3. Explain the importance of monitoring total calorie, added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium intake in their diet.

## Teaching Instructions

1. Start the class by providing a brief overview of the topics to be covered and what you hope your students will get out of the lesson.
  - **Kick off the lesson with one or more of these discussion starters:** **Ask your students** to talk about their favorite snacks. What do they snack on? How do they decide what snacks to eat? Why do they find themselves snacking? Explore the motivations behind why, when and what your students are choosing when snacking.
2. Offer some information about healthy snacking and how your students can make healthier choices.
  - Snacks can help you get the nutrients you need to develop, stay energized and maintain a healthy weight.
  - Choose a variety of snacks from each of the major food groups. Mix and match over the course of a week. Since foods contain different nutrients, eating a variety of foods from each food group is important for a healthy diet. **Ask your students** to give you some examples from each food group. Use the chart below for ideas.

<b>Grains</b>	whole grain crackers, whole grain cereal, rice cakes made with brown rice or whole grain brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole wheat mini bagels, whole wheat tortillas
<b>Vegetables</b>	carrots, celery, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, green beans, sugar peas, avocados
<b>Fruits</b>	apple, tangerine, strawberry, banana, pineapple, kiwi, peach, mango, nectarine, melon, grapes, berries, dried apricots
<b>Dairy</b>	low-fat cheese slices or string cheese, low-fat or fat-free yogurt, fat-free or low-fat milk, low-fat cottage cheese
<b>Protein Foods</b>	boiled egg, peanut butter, bean dip, hummus, slices of lean turkey or chicken, nuts and seeds
<b>Oils</b>	salad dressing, olive oil



## Resource

Share the **National, Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's Healthy Snack site** (Link: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/healthy-cooking.htm>) with your students. Ideas include:

- Toss sliced apples, berries, bananas, or whole-grain cereal on top of fat-free or low-fat yogurt.
  - Put a slice of fat-free or low-fat cheese on top of whole-grain crackers.
  - Make a whole-wheat pita pocket with hummus, lettuce, tomato, and cucumber.
  - Pop some fat-free or low-fat popcorn.
  - Microwave or toast a soft whole grain tortilla with fat-free or low-fat cheese and sliced peppers and mushrooms to make a mini-burrito or quesadilla.
  - Drink fat-free or low-fat milk (blend it with a banana or strawberries and some ice for a smoothie).
- 
- Talk about how simple swaps or substitutions with foods lower in added fats and sugars, as well as calories, can be an easy way to make healthier choices
    - Calories are the measure of energy a food or beverage provides—from the carbohydrates, fat, and protein it contains. Calories are the fuel you need to work and play. Foods and beverages vary in how many calories and nutrients they contain. When choosing what to eat and drink, it's important to get the right mix—enough nutrients, but not too many calories.
    - In general, you will gain weight when the calories you eat and drink are greater than the calories you burn. The current high rates of overweight and obesity in the United States mean that many people are taking in more calories than they burn.
  - Explain that many common snacks are high in added sugars and saturated fat. Discuss how choosing snacks with relatively few to no calories from added sugars or saturated fats can help your students pick healthier snacks.
    - **Added Sugars:** These are sugars and syrups which are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared. This does not include naturally occurring sugars such as those in milk and fruits.
    - Added sugars provide calories without providing additional nutrients.
    - **Saturated Fats:** Foods that contain more saturated fat—for example, butter—are usually solid at room temperature and are sometimes called “solid” fat. Foods that contain more unsaturated fat—for example, vegetable oil—are usually liquid at room temperature.
    - Saturated fat raises the level of cholesterol in your blood, which can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.
    - Information about the amounts of saturated fat and added sugar can be found on the labels and ingredient lists for most products.

- **Ask your students** to brainstorm common snacks that are likely high in added sugar and saturated fat. Have them compare the food labels of several popular snacks, looking for added sugars and fats compared to the other nutrients.
- Explain the importance of choosing snacks that are lower in sodium. **Ask your students** to think about the snacks they choose in a typical day – how many of them are salty? Try to choose snacks with less than 200 milligrams (mg) of sodium per serving.
  - Sodium is found in salt.
  - Too much sodium is bad for your health.
  - Eating less sodium can reduce risk for high blood pressure and can help keep your heart healthy for sports, reduce your risk for serious illness, and help you look and feel good.

 Tip

Tell your students about the American Heart Association pledge to cut sodium. Ask them to consider taking the pledge and to share it with their family members, especially parents and grandparents to see if they would take the pledge too. (Link: <http://sodiumbreakup.heart.org/pledge/>)

 Tip

Snacks can help teens get the nutrients needed to grow and maintain a healthy weight. Review the Hacking Your Snack tipsheet to get more tips on choosing a satisfying and healthy snack. (Link: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate-mywins-tips-hacking-your-snacks>)

 Tip

Have your students browse CDC information about salt: <https://www.cdc.gov/salt/>

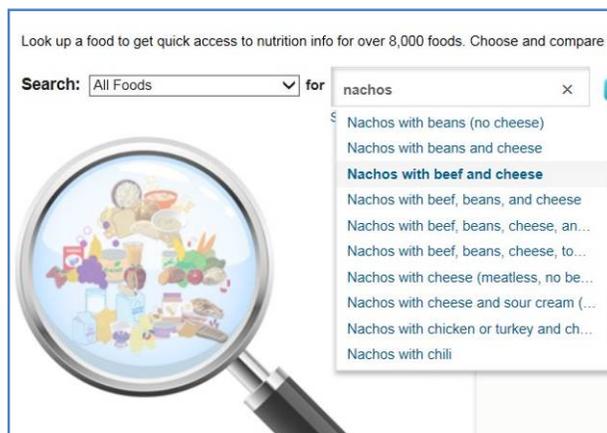
 Tip

Show your class USDA's Infographic on Healthy Snacks for 100 calories. Then, using the SuperTracker, challenge them to come up with 10 more options as either an exercise in class or as homework. (Link: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/downloads/hundredcalories.pdf>)

- Demonstrate the Food-A-Pedia feature by showing the “Getting Started: How to Use Food-A-Pedia” SuperTracker site tour video available on YouTube (2 min. 8 sec.).  
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EZI-Zfhd78&feature=youtu.be>
- Go to the SuperTracker website. If your students have individual computers, have them follow these steps. Otherwise, this can be demonstrated for the class via a projected computer screen in the classroom, library or other school facility with computer access.  
Link: <https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx>
- Show students how to navigate to the Food-A-Pedia feature.



- Demonstrate how to search for a food using Food-A-Pedia. For example, search for the food “nachos” and select “nachos, with beef and cheese”.



7. Show your students where to find the (1) total calories, (2) food groups, (3) calories from added sugars, (4) calories from saturated fat, and (5) sodium content. Discuss the healthfulness of this snack. Consider the number of food groups, total calories, calories from added sugars and saturated fat, and sodium content.

**Nachos with beef and cheese**

Choose an amount:  
1 cup

+ Add to Food Tracker

**Food Info** Nutrient Info

**1** Total Calories: 306

Food Groups	Amount	Limits	Calories
Grains	1 oz.	Added Sugars	0 Calories
Dairy	½ cup(s)	Saturated Fat	81 Calories
Protein Foods	1½ oz.	Sodium	258 mg
Oils	1 tsp.		

**3** Added Sugars 0 Calories

**4** Saturated Fat 81 Calories

**5** Sodium 258 mg

8. Show students how to compare two foods. For example, compare 1 cup of “Milk, fat free (skim)” to 1 cup of “Milk, whole”.

**Milk, fat free (skim)**

Choose an amount:  
1 cup

+ Add to Food Tracker

**Food Info** Nutrient Info

**Total Calories: 83**

Food Groups	Amount	Limits	Calories
Dairy	1 cup (s)	Added Sugars	0 Calories
		Saturated Fat	1 Calories
		Sodium	103 mg

**Milk, whole**

Choose an amount:  
1 cup

+ Add to Food Tracker

**Food Info** Nutrient Info

**Total Calories: 149**

Food Groups	Amount	Limits	Calories
Dairy	1 cup (s)	Added Sugars	0 Calories
		Saturated Fat	41 Calories
		Sodium	105 mg

9. Point out the similarities and differences in food groups, total calories, saturated fat, and sodium between the two foods.

	1 cup of skim milk	1 cup of whole milk
<b>Food Groups</b>	1 cup Dairy	1 cup Dairy
<b>Total Calories</b>	83 calories	149 calories
<b>Added Sugars</b>	0 calories	0 calories
<b>Saturated Fat</b>	0 calories	45 calories
<b>Sodium</b>	103	105

10. Show students how to compare 1 bottle (12 fl oz) of “Powerade sports drink” to 1 bottle (12 fl oz) of “Water, bottled, unsweetened”.

The screenshot shows two side-by-side panels for a nutrition tracking application. Each panel has a 'Remove' button in the top right corner.

**Left Panel: Powerade sports drink**

- Choose an amount: 1 bottle (12 fl oz)
- + Add to Food Tracker
- Total Calories: 117**
- Food Info** / Nutrient Info
- Food Groups: (empty)
- Limits:
  - Added Sugars: 85 Calories
  - Saturated Fat: 0 Calories
  - Sodium: 80 mg

**Right Panel: Water, bottled, unsweetened**

- Choose an amount: 1 bottle (12 fl oz)
- + Add to Food Tracker
- Total Calories: 0**
- Food Info** / Nutrient Info
- Food Groups: (empty)
- Limits:
  - Added Sugars: 0 Calories
  - Saturated Fat: 0 Calories
  - Sodium: 7 mg

11. Point out the similarities and differences in food groups, total calories, added sugars, and sodium between these two beverages.

	12 fluid ounce bottle of sports drink	12 fluid ounce bottle of water
• <b>Food Groups</b>	None	None
• <b>Total Calories</b>	117 calories	0 calories
• <b>Added Sugars</b>	85 calories	0 calories
• <b>Saturated Fat</b>	0 calories	0 calories
• <b>Sodium</b>	80 mg	7 mg

12. **Ask your students** to come up with a list of snack foods that they think might be a healthy choice. Remind them that the snacks should have less than 200 calories per portion, contribute to at least one food group, and have less than 200 milligrams sodium per portion. Have your students practice using Food-A-Pedia on computers in the classroom or library to test their hypothesis and determine whether the snacks suggested meet these criteria. Your students could also use the internet on their phones to conduct this research, if this is permitted by school and classroom rules.

13. Distribute the *Track Your Snack* handout to your students.

14. Assign as homework, extra credit or use for classroom discussion:

- Have your students analyze, review, and compare their favorite snack items using Food-A-Pedia.
- Have students complete the *Track Your Snack* handout, which requires them to use Food-A-Pedia to learn about the healthfulness of snack choices.

## Reflection, Evaluation and Discussion

Summarize the class discussion. Encourage your students to reflect on the topics presented by asking discussion questions such as:

- Why do we need foods from all the MyPlate food groups?
- Why is it important to make healthy snack choices?
- What prevents you from making healthy snack choices? How can you overcome these barriers?

Additional questions from the handout could also be used to supplement in-class discussion.

Check for understanding and encourage your students to ask questions if they need any further clarification of the lesson.



## Beyond the Classroom

### **In School**

Develop posters or other display to compare results from a snack analysis – e.g., good choices at fast food restaurants or in the school cafeteria, amount of calories, fat and sugar in popular beverages, ways to make a snack category work for you. Post these in a hallway, display cases, or cafeteria, as permitted.

### **Out of School**

Make a shopping list of healthy snacks and share with family. Have your students agree on a list that their family will actually buy/try to promote better snacking habits at home. Make it fun! You can turn a trip to the grocery store or convenience store into a scavenger hunt for the most tasty and healthy snack.

### **Wellness Council**

Coordinate with school administrator to conduct nutrient analysis of vending machine options, a la carte cafeteria choice, and/or items available at school event concessions.

## Notes

Record any notes about this lesson. For example, did your students understand the material? Are there any changes to the lesson you would like to make for next time?

---

---

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Track Your Snack

### Instructions

Use SuperTracker's Food-A-Pedia feature to answer the questions below. You can access Food-A-Pedia here: <https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/foodapedia.aspx>

1. Search for your favorite snack using Food-A-Pedia and select the amount you typically eat.

A. What is your favorite snack? \_\_\_\_\_

B. How many food groups are in it? \_\_\_\_\_ food groups

C. What are the food groups? \_\_\_\_\_

D. How many total calories does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ total calories

E. How much saturated fat does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ calories from saturated fat

F. How much added sugars does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ calories from added sugars

G. How much sodium does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ mg

H. Based on this information, will you be choosing this snack: (check one)

More often

Less often

The same

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is another snack you like to eat? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Compare this snack to your favorite snack in Food-A-Pedia. Is one of the snacks a better choice? If yes, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Compare 1 cup of "100% Apple juice" and 1 cup of "Fruit drink".

• Which option contributes to the Fruit food group? \_\_\_\_\_

• Which option has more added sugars?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Which option is the better choice? Why?

---

---

5. Use Food-A-Pedia to find a snack that (1) has less than 200 calories per portion, (2) contributes to at least one food group, and (3) has less than 200 mg sodium per portion.

- What snack did you find? \_\_\_\_\_
- Choose an amount you typically eat. What amount did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_
- What food group(s) does it contribute to? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many total calories does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ total calories
- How much saturated fat does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ calories from saturated fat
- How much added sugars does it have? \_\_\_\_\_ calories from added sugars
- How much sodium does it have per portion? \_\_\_\_\_ mg

6. Think of two snacks that you typically eat. Look up the nutrition content of both snacks using Food-A-Pedia and compare (1) the number of food groups, (2) the number of calories, (3) the amount of added sugars, (4) the amount of saturated fat, and (5) the amount of sodium.

7. Why is healthy snacking important?

---

---

---

8. Identify one barrier that prevents you from making healthy snack choices. How can you overcome this barrier?

---

---

---