

How to Keep the Crunch in Your Life

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How to Make Healthy Crunchy Snacks

Do you like to eat crunchy foods but can't find healthy choices? Seeking healthier food options in your eating plan doesn't have to lead to a crunch-less snack time. Here are some suggestions for great substitutions:

Popcorn: Who doesn't love popcorn? Surprise, it's healthy for you (whole grain and all) and it's a good source of fiber. Compared to the volume, it's also low in carbs. Just 15 grams in three cups. Choose air-popped popcorn to avoid the fat and limit fatty, salty toppings. Enjoy, but avoid excessive portion sizes. You can flavor your popcorn with non-fat or very low fat toppings, like chili powder, cinnamon, curry powder, grated parmesan cheese, or dried herbs. Serve with a side of cheese sticks to add protein to your snack, too.

Nuts: Crunches are in every bite when eating nuts. To make your own style of savory nuts, toss a cup of raw, unsalted nuts with a teaspoon of olive oil and seasonings you like—such as garlic, curry, chili, or others. To roast nuts, mix in just a pinch of salt and spread in a single layer on a sheet pan. (For sweet nuts, toss nuts with canola oil and season with cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and/or cardamom and a little low-calorie sweetener). Roast for 10 to 15 minutes. Nuts are a source of healthy fats but also high in calories, so limit your serving size to a small handful (about 1.5 ounces).

Kale and Swiss chard chips: Here's a way to have your greens and get your crunch. Preheat your oven to 275 degrees F. Wash and thoroughly dry the greens. Strip leaves from the tough ribs and roughly chop them. Toss with a little olive oil (a mister that sprays the oil is great for this), salt, and pepper—and maybe some of your favorite herbs or spices. Spread out on a baking sheet and bake until crisp. There are 6 grams of carbohydrates per cup serving.

Baked whole wheat tortilla chips: Get rid of a lot of fat while still keeping the crunch with this healthy twist on classic tortilla chips. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly spray a baking sheet with cooking spray. Cut three whole wheat flour tortillas into eight pieces each, place on baking sheet and spray with cooking spray and salt, if desired. Bake for 10 minutes until light brown and crisp. Serve with salsa and shredded cheese to add more protein to your snack. Four chips contain 20 grams of carbohydrates. You can also bake corn tortillas to make chips. About 10 corn tortilla chips contain 14 grams of carbohydrates.

Crispy chickpeas(garbanzo beans): Here's a great fiber-filled option that's easy to prepare using canned beans. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees F. Drain and rinse a can of chickpeas, then dry thoroughly. In a bowl, mix together garbanzo beans, one tablespoon of olive oil, cinnamon, cumin, chili powder, and salt. Spread the garbanzo bean

mixture evenly on baking sheet. Bake for 40–45 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes, until beans are crispy and dry. Remove from oven and place hot beans in a medium bowl. Add one tablespoon of olive oil and a low-calorie sweetener brown sugar blend. Mix well. Pour beans on parchment paper and allow to cool for 20 minutes. One-quarter cup is a serving of 15 grams of carbohydrates.

Apple chips: The trick to getting the crunch into these chips is to slice them super thin with a mandolin, or as thin as you can with a knife. Preheat your oven to 200 degrees F. Thinly slice the apple to make round chips. No oil is required for this recipe. Lay the apple slices in a single layer on a sheet pan that has been covered with parchment paper, sprinkle with cinnamon and bake for one hour. After one hour of baking, flip the apples and continue baking for another one to two hours. Let cool and store in an airtight container. 10 chips contain 13 grams of carbohydrates. Serve with turkey or salmon jerky or rolled up slices of turkey to add more protein to this snack.

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