

THE CORNER SHOP

Hungry and in a hurry? Or taking a pit stop during a road trip? Convenience stores -- as their name suggests -- are always around the corner when you need to grab something in a pinch. And most convenience stores today offer at least a few healthy options amid all the junk food. From the healthiest of nuts, to protein and calcium-rich snacks loaded with probiotics, to a wide variety of diet-friendly low-calorie foods, we have a few healthier recommendations to satisfy all your cravings for crunchy, savory and sweet.



How many calories are in a handful of nuts? Not many when your hand is full of delicious pistachios! In shell, 32 pistachios will serve up only 100 calories. Considered to be one of the healthiest of all the tree nuts, pistachios are an excellent source of fiber, potassium and other nutrients. One serving of pistachios has as much fiber as two plums. And if the words "low-calorie" and "nutrient-rich" don't spark your interest, consider this: Recent studies suggest that eating small amounts of pistachios daily may lower cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart disease.



Available in most convenience stores, mozzarella sticks are a great protein-rich snack that is usually under 100 calories. These fun-to-eat snacks have approximately between 7 to 9 grams of protein and are a good source of vitamin A and calcium. They are also a great snack for people on low carb diets. There might not be more than one brand available at your local convenience store, but if there is, double check the nutrition facts and the ingredients to ensure that you choose the healthiest option. Look for the highest amount of protein and lowest number of calories.

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Cereal cups are almost always available at your local convenience store. Just as you would at the supermarket, read the nutrition facts to choose a cereal that is made with whole grains, rich in dietary fiber, and low in sodium and added sugar. Add some milk and/or a banana -- both of which you can also find at a convenience store -- for a filling breakfast. Or snack on the dry cereal to satisfy your craving for something crunchy. It will be a far better choice than potato chips.



Peanuts are not actually nuts at all – they are a species in the legume family, along with beans. Peanuts provide a great source of vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin E, folate, zinc and manganese. These nutrients keep your immune system healthy, acting as antioxidants and helping prevent chronic diseases. And if that weren't enough, they are completely cholesterol free! A small bag of peanuts is usually cheap and easy to eat on the go. If you tend to scarf your snacks before you have a chance to feel full, buy peanuts in the shell. The extra effort that you'll put into shelling them will have you eating slower and quite possibly less.



Grab a vegetable juice such as V8 or a fruit juice for a major dose of vitamins A, C and E. Make sure your juice is 100 percent real juice though, so that you can reap all the benefits from the fruits and vegetables without added sugars. Search for juices rich in vitamin A (found in orange and green vegetables) and vitamin C (found in berries and citrus fruit).

Extracted from the great site www.bhf.org.uk

See the full article at <https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/nutrition/weight/perfect-portions/top-tips-for-portion-control>

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Yogurt is a protein and calcium-rich snack loaded with beneficial bacteria known as probiotics. It's perfect for health conscious people looking for a snack on the go. According to the National Yogurt Association, yogurt's many health benefits include boosting immunity, promoting strong bone mass, and reducing the risk for colorectal cancer. It's best to choose plain yogurt and add your own fruit for flavoring (try half of a banana, also available at most convenience stores) to avoid added sugars. Or grab a single-serve pack of Greek yogurt, which has double the protein of traditional yogurt.



Whole grain granola bars are rich in soluble fiber that helps clear out excess cholesterol. Some granola bars are high in sugar, so compare the nutrition labels on the store's available brands. Look for bars that list whole grains as the first ingredient; whole grains may significantly lower your risk of obesity, Type 2 diabetes and stroke, according to research. Consider brands such as Quaker Chewy Granola Bars and Kashi Go Lean bars.



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Second to oil, coffee is the most-traded commodity in the world, and there is a good reason for that. Coffee is a quick, low calorie beverage that can make a tasty snack. It's full of antioxidants and helps improve your mental function. Be careful of all those yummy creamers at the gas station mini mart, because they can be high in sugar and calories. Opt for black coffee for the best boost, or choose a flavored coffee variety like French vanilla to add some sweetness without extra calories.



Trail mix is a satisfying, portable treat perfect for tossing in a backpack or purse. Opt for mixes that include nuts, seeds and dried fruits, and avoid the ones with processed carbs like pretzels or sweets such as chocolate chips. In addition, be sure to keep an eye on portion size. Most of the options that you'll have available will have more than one serving per package.



Salty, chewy jerky may seem unhealthy, but it's actually a low-fat source of high-quality protein. One ounce of beef or turkey jerky provides your body with 13 grams of protein and only one gram of dietary fat. The bottom line? There's a good reason why jerky was the chosen travel food of early explorers and travelers -- it's a savory and sustaining snack. However, jerky is still quite high in sodium, so try to stick to one serving, and avoid it if your doctor has told you to limit your sodium intake.

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Most likely, the little carrots in the bag aren't really "babies" at all. Most so-called "baby carrots" are actually "baby-cut carrots," i.e. large full-grown carrots cut into snackable shapes. Baby carrots are a good source of vitamins C and K, antioxidants that support the immune system and battle free radicals. A good source of fiber, carrots are easy to eat and a good source of energizing B vitamins. Grab them when you're craving a crunchy or sweet snack instead of reaching for chips or candy.



By eating a banana you can indulge your sweet tooth without a sugar crash. A banana averages only about 110 calories. What's more, they are naturally fat-free and cholesterol-free. Bananas are also known for their high potassium levels, an electrolyte that also helps regulate blood pressure.



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Carrots and bananas not enough to satisfy your sweet cravings? Reach for Fig Newtons as a healthier cookie option. Two Fig Newtons will only run you 100 calories and 20 grams of carbs — far less than anything else in the cookie or candy aisle.



Most convenience stores keep hard boiled eggs in their refrigerated shelf sections. Eggs are high in protein (6 grams per egg, if you eat the yolk) and can keep you feeling full until your next meal. Eggs contain 13 essential nutrients, and each egg is only 70 calories on average. Be sure to eat the yolk for an extra dose of healthy vitamins and minerals.



Dried fruit is a natural source of energy for athletes on the go. Some dried fruits such as dates and figs are a good source of antioxidants. In fact, some types of antioxidants are higher in dried fruits compared to their fresh counterparts. Beware of overeating dried fruit however, as the calories and sugar can add up quickly! Try buying a small portion or rationing out snack-sized portions from the big bags.

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An apple a day really can help keep the doctor away. Apples have been known to help control weight, detoxify your liver and even lower levels of "bad" LDL cholesterol. They reduce the amount of bacteria in your mouth and help prevent tooth decay. Apples are also a high fiber snack, boasting 17 percent of your daily fiber needs.



Milk is a quick source of protein, minerals and vitamins for people who eat dairy and are not lactose intolerant. It's high in vitamin A and vitamin D and helps maintain a healthy heart. If you are watching your weight, opt for skim or fat-free milk to cut down on calories. The American Heart Association recommends that adults consume two to three servings of milk products a day.

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Don't be fooled by their small size, sunflower seeds are a powerhouse of goodness. They can help lower cholesterol levels and even may make you feel happier. That's because sunflower seeds contain tryptophan, which helps in processing the feel-good brain chemical serotonin. As with all nuts, be mindful of the portion size. If you've been known to toss back handfuls of sunflower seeds at a time, opt for in-shell sunflower seeds to slow yourself down.



Yes, water may be an obvious one, but it is also one that's most certainly underrated. Two thirds of Americans don't drink the recommended amount of water each day. According to the Institute of Medicine, women should drink at least 9 cups a day, while men need about 13 cups daily. Aside from playing a crucial roll in keeping you hydrated, water can help you control your appetite. Remember that you need to drink more water the more active you are and the warmer the weather gets.