



QUICK HEALTHY FOOD TO HAVE ON HAND

Because many of us are very busy with work, travel, and life in general, having quick but healthy and appealing foods on hand is very important. Many of us grab a quick-fix sugar rush such as an energy bar, candy bar, or get hyped up on coffee. The important thing is to supply your body with good fuel, and balanced meals, snacks, or nibbles. To have balance, it is important to consume protein, fat, and Carbohydrates all at the same time. This keeps your body fueled the best, and minimizes dips in bloodsugar, energy level, and hunger.

Some good examples of quick-fix healthy foods include:

- 1) oatmeal—can be cooked in the microwave in minutes. Or if it is instant and you have access to hot-water can be ready in minutes. A bowl of oatmeal with a small handful of unsalted walnuts will provide you a good source of protein, healthy unsaturated fat, and whole-grain carbohydrate, all in one fell swoop.
- 2) Whole-grain bread with peanut butter or cream cheese. Both peanut butter and cream cheese are good sources of protein and fat, especially mono-unsaturated (with peanut butter). With Cream cheese it is better to go with low-fat to avoid too much saturated fat. Of course, the whole-grain bread will provide a good source of carbohydrates with fiber.
- 3) Boxed soy-milk with a piece of fruit (ie. Banana). The soy milk (any soy product) is an excellent source of protein and unsaturated fat. Fruit is a source of carbohydrates, and fruit contains fiber and other antioxidants which are healthy for the body.
- 4) Low-fat yogurt and high-fiber cereal. Dairy products are an excellent source of well-digested protein. A little bit of fat in low-fat yogurt will help maintain satiety. High-fiber cereals will provide crunch, carbohydrate, and satiating fiber.
- 5) If you are a sushi fan, sushi or edamame make excellent quick on-the-go meals. Sushi is a perfectly balanced meal wrapped in one, because it has protein from the seafood, carbohydrate from the rice, and a little fat, also from the seafood. Edamame, is soybean, which is one of those “perfect” foods, contains the perfect balance of protein, carbohydrate, and fat. In one nice tiny bundle.
- 6) Finally, a throwback to the 80s, “ants on a log,” ie. Vegetables, such as celery, with peanut butter and raisins. Again, you get your healthy vegetables for fiber and bulk, raisins for carbohydrate and fiber, and peanut butter for protein and fat. We knew our mothers made these treats for us for a reason!

As far as frozen meals go, if it has the word “healthy” on the label, it has to meet certain nutritional requirements. Such that it cannot have more than 3grams of fat, no more than 650mg sodium, and no more than 1 gram of saturated/trans fats. Additionally, it has to have a certain percentage of vitamins and minerals in it.

While I wouldn't go as far as to say these frozen meals are “good for people.” I would go as far as to say that if someone does not like to cook and has to make the choice between ordering take-out which has an unknown amount of fat and calories and other nutrients in it versus buying a meal made by Kashi or Healthy choice. I would be much more encouraging of them buying the frozen “healthier” dinner.

Kashi brand in particular is known for its healthier foods, and using the best ingredients...so I am fond of Kashi as a brand.

As far as cheese go. String cheese is one of the lower-fat cheeses and is a decent source of protein, with a little fat, and low amounts of Carbohydrate. This makes a good on-the-go snack if refrigeration is a problem, as it does not really go bad.

Soft cheeses such as brie and camembert, or other aged cheese such as parmesan or blue cheeses are typically very high in fat, saturated fat especially, high in calories, low in protein. Therefore, they do not make good well-balanced snacks. But, they're ok for occasional eating purposes.