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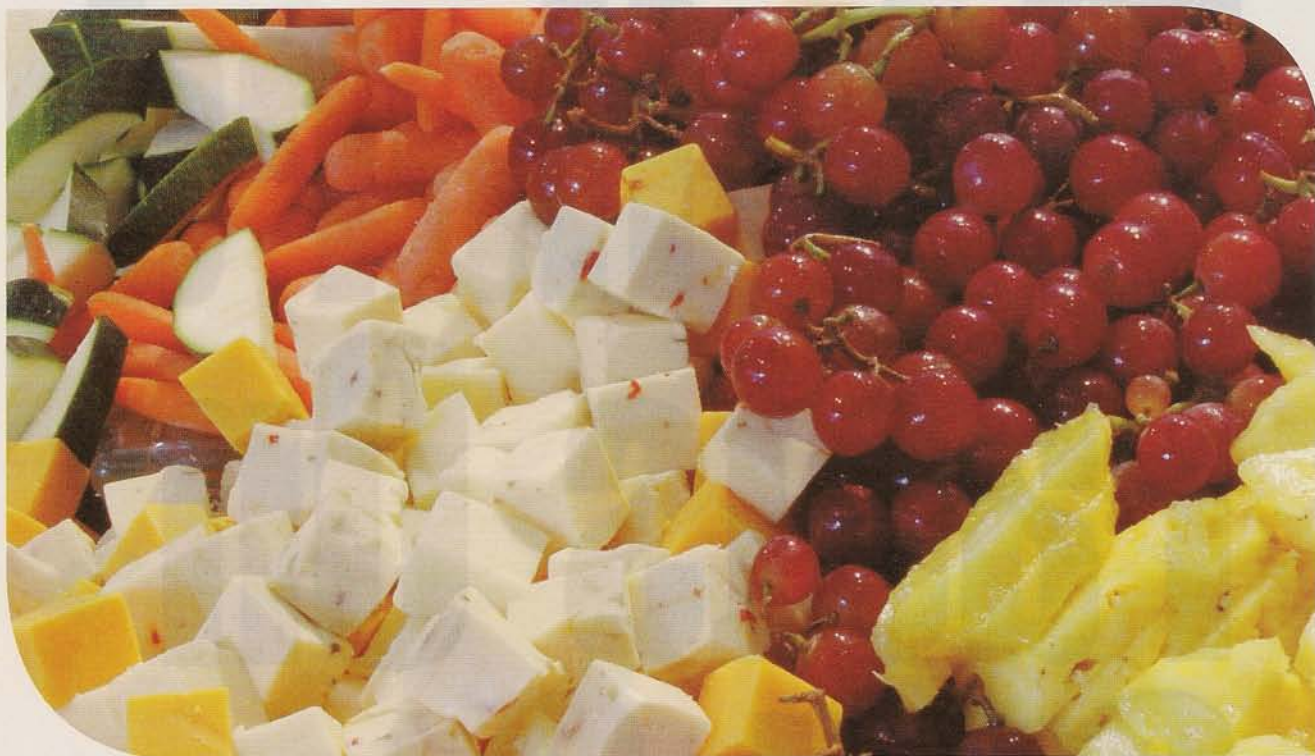
Small steps to green offices

You don't need to rebuild;
simple things will help the
environment

March is last month to register for
Award of Distinction (pg. 75)

Negotiating with the boss
for new technology

Snacks to munch on in the dental office



Healthier snacks

What dental hygienists should munch on during the course of a busy day

by Juli Kagan, RDH, MEd

There are simply not enough hours in a day. Whether it's an overfilled schedule, an errand that took longer than expected, or a complication on a perfectly organized agenda, sometimes it seems finding the time to simply relax becomes a major ordeal.

It's often during these unruly times that eating on the run becomes the modus operandi. It's catch as catch can! Have you ever, between patient appointments, run to the back room/lounge/kitchen and grabbed a bag of chips and a soda to simply carry you through until you can "get a break," or you've nibbled on something unhealthy that's sitting on the counter, just because it's there? I've been known to stand in front of the refrigerator staring blankly and eating whatever pops out at me. I'm hungry, for goodness' sake!

There are periods of time that can be very demanding, but what you grab can make a huge difference in how you feel and deal with people during the day.

Instead of going for simple carbohydrate foods such as candy or soda, which your body will crave due to low sugar, go for complex carbohydrates and high protein snacks like whole-grain crackers and peanut butter.

Be careful in choosing snacks. Some items are really not "natural" or

"pure." A perfect example is a granola bar, or even worse, "high protein energy" bars. Always check the calories, fats, and carbohydrates. Some snacks are outlandish! Be mindful of portion size too.

Here are some healthy, easy-to-prepare, grab-and-go snack foods:

- Apple and cheese slices (fresh parmesan is wonderful)
- Celery or baby carrots (prepackaged) and hummus
- Peanut butter and Kashi crackers
- Unsalted, raw almonds, walnuts, and cranberries
- Low-fat and low-sugar yogurt and flaxseed, cereal, or healthy granola
- Whole wheat pretzels and mustard

- Rice cakes with peanut butter
- Half a sandwich (left over from lunch)
- Salsa (fresh) and baked tortilla chips (not fried)
- Whole wheat fig bars
- Air popped popcorn (sprinkled with cinnamon)
- Banana (an easy one! You don't even need a napkin for juice overflow.)
- Grapes and cheese wedge (prepackaged)
- Cheese sticks (compare labels for the most nutritious)
- Tomato and tuna (packed in water)
- Whole grain Crispbread and cottage cheese
- Pineapple and cottage cheese
- Unsweetened applesauce with cinnamon (Mott's Natural Style)
- Zucchini and squash slices (prepackaged) and low-fat dressing (I prefer yogurt/cucumber)
- Soy nuts (unsalted and unroasted)
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sliced low salt turkey or chicken (Boars Head brand

has no preservatives). Just roll it up and eat!

- V-8 (ready in the can). What could be more easy and healthy?

My favorite evening snack is fruit and a small (one inch by one inch) square of 72% dark chocolate.

Of course, all these suggestions can be mixed and matched. For example, instead of pineapple with cottage cheese, you could have blueberries or apples. You could choose a different cracker or whole wheat pita as a replacement for the rice cake. My favorite is a fruit or vegetable with some protein, such as grapes and chicken.

The idea is to keep your energy up and your hunger at bay. Be mindful when your stomach growls and you feel like indulging on any available treat. Go for variety, moderation, nutrition, and of course, balance! If my philosophy of exercise, diet, and life serves me right, that's the key to everything — even when time is fickle and unpredictable.

Mind your body and keep moving! ●●●