

## CRITERIA FOR SNAC BEST BITE MEALS

SNAC “Best Bite” meals are **BALANCED, HEALTHY**, and **CALORIE-CONSCIOUS** meals to help you feel, look, and perform your best! Three “Best Bite” meal choices are offered daily at the Cougar cafe. Be sure to ask for a “Best Bite” meal frequency card so you can get one free after 10 purchases.

**BALANCED** – Each meal has a good balance of the 3 major food groups:

- **Vegetables and/or Fruits** – High in water and fiber to provide bulk and satiety without a lot of calories. Rich in vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients to promote optimal health.
- **Grains and/or Starchy Vegetables** – High in carbohydrate for physical and mental energy. Look for 100% whole grains for the most fiber and nutrients.
- **Poultry, Fish, Meat, Eggs, Beans, Nuts, Soy, and/or Milk** – Rich in protein for satiety and maintenance of lean body mass and immune function. High in many vitamins and minerals.

**HEALTHY** – Each meal meets the FDA’s labeling criteria for a “healthy” designation<sup>1\*</sup>:

- < 30% calories from total fat
- < 10% calories from saturated fat
- >10% Daily Value for at least 3 of the following beneficial nutrients: vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, iron, protein, or fiber

NOTE: Each “Best Bite” meal also has 0 g trans fat and provides  $\geq$  1 cup of vegetables.

Reference: <sup>1</sup><http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/flg-6-2.html>

\* Unfortunately, “Best Bite” meals exceed the FDA’s “healthy” criteria for sodium levels (with an average of ~900 mg in a “Best Bite” meal vs. the recommended <600 mg). Be sure to avoid the salt shaker, read food labels, and limit processed foods to keep your daily total sodium to < 2300 mg.

**CALORIE-CONSCIOUS** – Each meal is **sensibly portioned to provide 350-550 total calories**.

### Why this calorie level?

- Calories are the key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Depending on age, physical activity, and weight goals, most women need 1600-2400 calories and most men need 2000-3000 calories per day<sup>2</sup>. Athletes and very active people may need significantly more.
- For optimal energy and metabolic health, it’s best to distribute calories evenly throughout the day. That means eating 3 balanced, healthy meals, plus 1-3 sensible snacks, every day.
- With this in mind, each “Best Bite” meal provides around 20-30% of total calories for someone who needs 1600-2000 calories per day. So, “Best Bite” meals can fit nicely into an overall healthy eating and physical activity plan.

### What if I need more food/calories?

- Many active men and women may want (and need!) more than 350-550 calories at a meal.
- You can supplement your “Best Bite” meal with extra energy and “healthy” calories by making it a **“Better Bite Combo”** (adding fresh fruit and a water or milk) or by choosing from a variety of **“SNAC-Approved Best Bite Snacks”** (at an extra cost). Consider low fat yogurt, unsalted nuts, trail mix, Sun Chips, or a higher fiber bar like Clif, Odwalla, or Kashi TLC granola bar.

Reference: <sup>2</sup>[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

All “Best Bite” meals are developed by SNAC members under the supervision of Registered Dietitian Sheri Barke and with the generous support of ISSI (COC’s food service contractor). For more information about your personal nutrition needs, contact Sheri at [sheri.barke@canyons.edu](mailto:sheri.barke@canyons.edu).