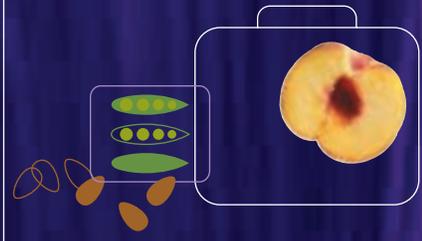




Health Facts



Get the Most Nutrition Out of Your Calories

Each major food group provides a variety of nutrients, so it's important to include all food groups in your daily eating plan. You will enjoy many different foods while getting essential nutrients that help you get the most nutrition out of your calories.

Many Americans don't consume enough foods that contain calcium, potassium, fiber, magnesium, and vitamins A, C, and E. At the same time, many Americans consume too many foods high in calories, saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and salt.

Getting the nutrients you need through a healthy diet is essential for growth, development, and overall health. So, look for foods that are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients, but lower in calories. These foods should be the foundation of your diet. Eating nutrient-packed foods helps you stay within your calorie needs while meeting your nutrient needs.

What are my daily calorie needs?

There is a right number of calories for you to eat each day. Find your number on the Estimated Calories Needed table on the next page. For example, a 40-year-old, sedentary woman should aim for 1,800 calories a day, while a 25-year-old, sedentary male should aim for 2,400 calories a day. You could use up the entire amount on a few high-calorie items, but chances are you won't get the full range of vitamins and nutrients that your body needs.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Eat a variety of nutrient-packed foods and beverages within and among the basic food groups, while limiting foods with saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt, as well as alcohol. Select a variety of foods from each food group and within food groups. A healthy eating plan is one that:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans (legumes), eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Balances calorie intake with calorie needs

Use the Nutrition Facts label.

Most packaged foods have a Nutrition Facts label. Use this tool to make smart food choices and find out how much you are actually eating. To use the label effectively:

Check servings and calories. Find out how much you are actually eating. Look at the serving size and how many servings you are consuming. If you are eating two servings, you are eating double the calories and the nutrients listed in the Nutrition Facts label for one serving of the food.

Check the percent Daily Value (% DV). For many nutrients, the Nutrition Facts label provides a % DV; 5% DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high.

- Try to get 100% DV per day of dietary fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium, potassium, and iron.
- Try to stay below 100% DV per day for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
- Try to keep trans fats as low as possible.

Read the ingredient list.

Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight from most to least. Make sure that those ingredients you want more of, such as whole grains (e.g., whole wheat) are listed first. Make sure that those you want to eat less of, such as added sugars, are not one of the first few ingredients. Some names for added sugars (caloric sweeteners) include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert corn syrup, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, maple syrup, raw sugar, sucrose, and syrup.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Potassium 700mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calories needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	300mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

You can get a big nutritional “bang for the bite” by making smart food choices. The comparisons on the right are some examples of how you can get more from your calories.

Some people with increased needs for particular nutrients should select food sources of these nutrients more often.

For example:

- *Many people over 50 years old* have reduced absorption of vitamin B12 and need to consume vitamin B12 in its crystallized form (examples include fortified cereals and vitamin B12 dietary supplements).
- *Women of childbearing age* tend to have low iron levels. Food sources for iron include lean meat, green leafy vegetables, dried fruit, and fortified cereals. Women of childbearing age also need folic acid, which is essential for fetal development. Synthetic folic acid (from fortified foods or supplements) in addition to food forms of folate such as oranges, whole grains, and dark leafy vegetables, should be consumed.
- *Older adults, people with dark skin, and people insufficiently exposed to sunlight* tend to need more vitamin D to help maintain bone health. Drinking vitamin D-fortified low-fat or fat-free milk is a good way to get vitamin D.

Smart Food Choices	
Vitamin A	
1 oz pretzels = 0 IU (0% DV) in 110 calories	vs.
1/2 c carrot sticks, raw = 7,700 IU (150% DV) in 30 calories	
Vitamin C	
1 12-fluid-oz soft drink = 0 mg (0% DV) in 160 calories	vs.
1 c (8 fluid oz) orange juice = 110 mg (180% DV) in 120 calories	
Dietary Fiber	
1 slice of white bread = 1 g (4% DV) in 80 calories	vs.
1 slice of whole-wheat bread = 2 g (8% DV) in 70 calories	
Vitamin E	
1 oz of potato chips = 3 mg (10% DV) in 152 calories	vs.
1 oz almonds = 7 mg (25% DV) in 160 calories	

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. 2004. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17. Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page, www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp.

Estimated Calories Needed by Gender, Age, and Activity Level ^a					
Gender	Age (Years)	Sedentary ^b	Moderately Active ^c	Active ^d	
Child	2 - 3	1,000	1,000 - 1,400 ^e	1,000 - 1,400 ^e	
	Female	4 - 8	1,200	1,400 - 1,600	1,400 - 1,800
		9 - 13	1,600	1,600 - 2,000	1,800 - 2,200
		14 - 18	1,800	2,000	2,400
		19 - 30	2,000	2,000 - 2,200	2,400
31 - 50		1,800	2,000	2,400	
Male	51+	1,600	1,800	2,000 - 2,200	
	Female	4 - 8	1,400	1,400 - 1,600	1,600 - 2,000
		9 - 13	1,800	1,800 - 2,200	2,000 - 2,600
		14 - 18	2,200	2,400 - 2,800	2,800 - 3,200
		19 - 30	2,400	2,600 - 2,800	3,000
31 - 50		2,200	2,400 - 2,600	2,800 - 3,000	
	51+	2,000	2,200 - 2,400	2,400 - 2,800	

^a These levels are based on Estimated Energy Requirements (EER) from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Dietary Reference Intakes Macronutrients Report, 2002, calculated by gender, age, and activity level for reference-sized individuals. “Reference size,” as determined by IOM, is based on median height and weight for ages up to 18 years and median height and weight for that height to give a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 21.5 for adult females and 22.5 for adult males.

^b Sedentary means a lifestyle that includes only the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

^c Moderately active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking about 1.5 to 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

^d Active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking more than 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life.

^e The calorie ranges shown are to accommodate needs of different ages within the group. For children and adolescents, more calories are needed at older ages. For adults, fewer calories are needed at older ages.



State of North Carolina | Department of Health and Human Services | Division of Public Health
 North Carolina Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program | www.ncdhs.gov

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For more information on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, please visit www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines.

