

How Many Calories Do You Need?

What are calories?

Calories are a unit of energy. When you eat or drink, you take in calories. We are always burning calories at rest but the amount of calories you burn in a day can fluctuate based on your movement and activity.

Remember, calories are just one way of looking at what you eat. Although having an understanding of how many calories you need may be helpful, the balance of your meals and the quality of foods you choose is equally important.



Calories come from Carbohydrates, Protein, Fats and Alcohol. Notice that fat has the most calories per gram with alcohol as a close second.

Calories per Gram	Carbohydrate	Protein	Fat	Alcohol
	4 cal/gram	4 cal/gram	9 cal/gram	7 cal/gram

How Many Calories Do You Need?

Calorie needs can vary based on age, height, weight and gender. If you're curious about how many calories you need, take a look at the charts and online resource below.

Women

Age	Sedentary	Moderately Active	Active
19-30	1,800-2,000	2,000-2,200	2,400
31-50	1,800	2,000	2,200
51+	1,600	1,800	2,000-2,200

Men

Age	Sedentary	Moderately Active	Active
19-30	2,400-2,600	2,600-2,800	3,000
31-50	2,200-2,600	2,400-2,600	2,800-3,000
51+	2,000-2,200	2,200-2,400	2,400-2,800

Sedentary means a lifestyle light physical activity associated with typical activities of daily life.

Moderately Active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking about 1.5-3 miles/day at a pace of 3-4 miles per hour (or equivalent exercise).

An active person walk more than 3 miles/day at the same pace (or equivalent exercise).

The chart above gives you calorie needs to maintain your weight. If you want to lose weight, you'll need to reduce your daily calories or increase your activity. It's recommended that you deduct no more than 1000 calories from your daily intake. An often used rule of thumb is to deduct 500 calories/day to lose 1 pound/week.

Source:
www.eatright.org

Looking for more information? Take a look at the National Institute of Health's Body Weight Planner:
<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/bwp>