

Planning for healthy diet

Figuring out how much to eat while achieving or maintaining a healthy weight can be difficult.

[Getting the proper nutrients](#) and eating the right amount for your weight and activity level can contribute to healthy aging. This article provides suggestions for how older adults can get the nutrients they need within a recommended daily number of calories.

A calorie is a unit of measurement that describes how much energy is released when your body breaks down food.

Although calorie count alone does not dictate whether a food is nutritious, thinking about how many calories you need can guide healthy eating habits.

If you are over age 60 and you want to maintain your current weight, how many calories do you need to eat each day?

Unsure which activity category you're in? Consult the [Dietary Guidelines](#) for definitions of each level. You can increase your [physical activity level](#) by adding walking, jogging (هروله), dancing, recreational sports, and other similar approaches to your day.

The average person needs of calories are about **2,000 calories** every day to maintain their weight, but the amount will depend on their age, sex, and physical activity level. Males tend to need more calories than females, and people who exercise need more calories than people who don't.

The [Dietary Guidelines](#) suggest:

For a Woman	Calories
Not physically active	1,600
Moderately active	1,800
Active lifestyle	2,000-2,200
For a Man	Calories
Not physically active	2,000-2,200
Moderately active	2,200-2,400
Active lifestyle	2,400-2,600

Nutrient-dense diet

Nutrient-dense foods are **rich in vitamins, minerals and other nutrients important for health, without too much saturated fat, added sugars and sodium**. There are seven essential factors for a balanced diet: **carbohydrates, protein, fat, fiber, vitamins, minerals and water**.

We're talking fruits, vegetables and legumes (beans) whole grains and cereals, non-fat and low-fat dairy, fish and seafood, unprocessed lean meat and skinless poultry, nuts, eggs, seeds to get healthy nutrient diet.

The average healthy person should consume **10 to 30 percent** of daily calories from protein, 45 to 65 percent from carbohydrates and 25 to 35 percent from fat. Healthy eating increases energy, improves the way your body functions, strengthens your immune system and prevents weight gain.

How many carbohydrates do you need? The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that carbohydrates make up **45% to 65% of total daily calories**. So if you get 2,000 calories a day, between 900 and 1,300 calories should be from carbohydrates. That translates to between 225 and 325 grams of carbohydrates a day.

carbohydrates are the best source of fuel for your body if you're active. Your body breaks carbohydrates down into glucose, which go out into your bloodstream, liver and muscles to fuel many functions in your body. [Your brain uses glucose](#) for energy as well as your muscles, which is why you need to consume it throughout the day.

protein :-Every cell in your body contains **protein**, as it's the main building material that your body uses. Your hair, muscle, bone and skin all contain protein . When you eat protein, your body breaks it down into [amino acids](#). It takes the amino acids and combines them to form new protein in different parts of your body.

Consuming 10 to 30 percent of your daily calories from protein should provide enough amino acids to keep your body functioning properly. If you go to the gym or play sports you should consume more protein than the average person. Exercise breaks down muscle and connective tissue, which needs to be replaced. Thirty-five percent of your daily calories should come from protein.

Fat :-Consuming at least 20 percent of your daily calories through **fat** should provide the minimum amount of fat-soluble vitamins and [fatty acids to stay healthy](#). Some vitamins can only survive if they're stored in fat cells, so you need to eat fat to get these vitamins in your diet.

Essential fatty acids, such as omega-3s, are an important part of a healthy diet. They can help lower your risk for heart disease and irregular heartbeat.

Each gram of fat is 9 calories.

You should avoid eating too much saturated fat, which can increase your risk for coronary heart disease.

Serving and portion sizes

- A “**serving size**” is a standard amount of a food, such as a cup or an ounce.
- Serving sizes can help you when choosing foods and when comparing similar items while shopping, but they are not recommendations for how much of a certain food to eat.
- The term “**portion**” means how much of a food you are served or how much you eat.
- A portion size can vary from meal to meal. For example, at home you may serve yourself two small pancakes in one portion, but at a restaurant, you may get a stack of four pancakes as one portion.
- A portion size may also be bigger than a serving size. For example, the serving size on the [nutrition label](#) for your favorite cereal may be 1 cup, but you may actually pour yourself 1½ cups in a bowl.
- Portion size can be a problem when eating out. To keep your portion sizes under control, try ordering smaller appetizers instead of an entrée (مقبلات) as your meal, or share an entrée with a friend. Or eat just one-half of an entrée and take the rest home to enjoy as a meal the next day.

Healthy food shifts

- Eating the right amount is important, but so is making sure you're getting all the nutrients you need.

Older adults often need fewer calories, but more nutrients, which makes it essential to eat nutrient-dense foods. To eat nutrient-dense foods across all the [food groups](#), you may need to make some changes in your food and beverage choices. You can move toward a [healthier eating pattern](#) by making shifts in food choices over time.

Here are some ideas :-

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Shift from:
High-calorie snacks



Shift to:
Nutrient-dense snacks



Fruit products with added sugars



Fresh fruit



Refined grains



Whole grains



Snacks with added salt or sugars



Snacks without added salt or sugars



Solid fats



Oils



Healthy beverage shifts

- It's easy to forget about calories you consume from beverages. If you drink sodas, creamy and sweet coffee drinks, or alcohol, swapping them out for healthier options can make a huge difference.
- There are plenty of beverage options that are low in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium.
- Here are some options:

Shift from:

Medium café latte made with whole milk



Shift to:

Small café latte made with fat-free milk



Regular cola



Water or water flavored with fruits
or vegetables



Sweetened lemon iced tea



Sparkling water with natural lemon flavor

