

General Nutrition Requirements

Calories

Calories are the energy in food that provide our bodies with the building blocks to repair old tissue, make new tissue (including immune cells), perform work or activities, and engage in regular functions such as digestion, regulating temperature and heartbeat, and many other tasks. All foods have calories of some amount, which depends on the ingredients and are shown on the “Nutrition Facts” label on the product. If you are currently at a healthy weight for your age and size (you can discuss this with your MD or Registered Dietitian/RD if you are not sure) then you should aim to maintain your weight by consuming 17 calories for each pound of weight every day.

Example: 145 pounds x 17 = 2464 calories (about 2500 calories) per day

Gaining Weight

If you need to gain weight, aim to increase your intake by about 500 calories per day above your basic weight maintenance needs.

Example: 145 pounds x 17 = 2464 + 500 calories = 2965 or about 3000 calories

Increasing by much more than 500 calories may make it difficult for your body to absorb and use the calories in a healthy way. Remember, increased body weight does not automatically protect you against disease. It's the composition of your body (the amount of muscle, fat and fluid) that regulates health. You can find out your body composition through a simple test called a BIA (bioelectrical impedance analysis) that your MD or RD may provide.

Losing Weight

If you need to lose weight, aim to reduce your intake by about 500 calories per day under your basic weight maintenance needs.

Example: 145 pounds x 17 = 2464 – 500 calories = 1965 or about 2000 calories

Decreasing by more than this amount may lead to protein losses or muscle atrophy. Weight loss should be very gradual, only about a pound or 2 each week, to prevent muscle loss or dehydration.

Protein

Most people need to eat about 0.75 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day.

Example: 145 pounds x 0.75 grams = 108.75 grams of protein or about 110 grams

Try to eat protein foods with all of your meals and snacks. If you have health problems such as liver or kidney disease, you may need a different amount, depending on your disease and its treatment. For more information or suggestions on how to incorporate protein, see fact sheet #1.

Fat

Fat is a necessary component of foods and is also a great way to increase calories if you need to gain weight. However, if you need to maintain or lose weight, limiting fat may help you reach your goals. There are different types of fat in foods, and some are better for us than others. Most people can healthfully eat about 1/3 of their intake from fat.

Example: 145 pounds x 17 calories = about 2500 calories x 1/3 = 825 calories from fat per day

Each gram of fat has 9 calories, so 825 calories of fat is about 92 grams (825 / 9 = 91.67) The “Nutrition Facts” label on individual foods provides information about how many grams of fat are contained in a serving of food. If you have heart disease, pancreatitis, or other health condition, you should discuss fat intake with your RD.

Healthier fats (with omega 3 fatty acids) include avocados, olive oil, canola oil, nuts and seeds, olives, fish, and flax. Less healthy versions (saturated fats or hydrogenated oils with trans-fatty acids) include butter,

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lard, coconut oil, palm oil, and many baked foods such as cookies and cakes. Try to replace the less healthy fats you currently eat with healthier choices.

Fluids

Most of us need at least 8 fluid cups of liquid each day. If you're a larger person, your needs may be greater, and petite people or children may get by with less. Some foods provide a lot of fluid, like soup or watery vegetables such as cucumbers or lettuce. However, your best bet is to aim for about 8 cups, or the amount that makes your urine a pale yellow or straw color. Some health conditions, such as kidney trouble or congestive heart failure, may require alterations in this amount. You should discuss your specific needs with your MD or RD.

The best source of fluid is clean water, usually bottled water, or tap water cooled after spending a full minute at a rolling boil. Other good sources of fluid include milk, 100% fruit juice, or sports drinks like Gatorade®. However, most beverages besides water contain calories. This can be beneficial if your appetite is low, you need to gain weight, or have high calorie needs. However, for those who need to maintain or lose weight, choosing calorie-free drinks is a better option. That way, you aren't consuming "empty" (sugar) calories which don't provide any vitamins, protein, or other nutrients your body needs for good health.

Additionally, watch out for caffeine. Many drinks such as "energy" drinks, soda, coffee and tea contain large amounts of caffeine. This ingredient acts as a diuretic, meaning it makes you go to the bathroom and your cells don't actually absorb the fluid you drink. If you drink large amounts of caffeinated drinks, in addition to the extra calories you may be getting (making it more difficult to achieve your healthy weight) you may also be losing fluid. Don't count drinks that contain caffeine as cups of fluid toward your total intake goal for the day.

General Vitamin and Mineral Recommendations

Science continues to find new beneficial compounds in foods. Additional vitamin and mineral supplementation is recommended when these necessary nutrients can not be obtained from food or there are problems

with digestion and/or absorption. If supplementation is needed, use a general purpose multi-vitamin/mineral supplement.

Consider adding a calcium supplement (calcium carbonate or calcium gluconate tend to be the best absorbed) if you are lactose intolerant or don't eat at least three servings of dairy or other high calcium foods each day. The recommended intake of calcium is 1200 mg each day.

For more specific information about vitamin and mineral supplementation, visit these sources:

<http://www.thebody.com/jossey/romeyn.html>

Lots of information and additional links for vitamin and mineral information.

<http://www.changingshape.com/resources/references/vmchart.asp>

The chart provided is very well done. However, ANSA is not taking a position regarding the products or their claims on this site.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000105.html#q3>

Very comprehensive information. Information regarding foods is available when you click on a specific vitamin or mineral.

http://ods.od.nih.gov/Health_Information/Vitamin_and_Mineral_Supplement_Fact_sheets.aspx

There is some cross over between this site and the previous one, but there is also additional information available on the home page for ODS.

<http://www.aegis.com/pubs/cria/2002/CR020310.html>

A relatively short but comprehensive chart which also includes upper recommended limits for vitamins and minerals.

Five easy things you can do to boost your nutrition

1. Drink 10 cups of water, juice, herb tea, or decaffeinated beverages.
2. Eat several servings of fruit and vegetables each day.
3. Eat 3 times a day or more.
4. Take a multi-vitamin if needed
5. Go for a walk or do some other form of exercise or activity each day.