

TIPS TO IMPROVING YOUR DIET

Heidi Reeder

It is important to balance out our diets to keep ourselves running smoothly in both body and mind. The foods we eat contribute to our energy level, body composition (fat to muscle ratio) and general health. The Surgeon General has made some dietary recommendations for optimal health. No more than 30% of our calories should come from fat. The average American diet derives 49% of its calories from fat — and the average American consumes the equivalent of one stick of butter daily through fats and oils hidden in the diet. We need 6-8 glasses of water a day and 50-65% of our calories should ideally come from complex carbohydrates (fruit, vegetables, breads and cereals).

Here are some easy tips for:

INCREASING WATER CONSUMPTION:

- Drink herbal teas with breakfast and snacks.
- Add lemon slices to ice water.
- Buy a glass or cup you really like and make that your water drinking glass.
- Drink sparkling waters instead of soda pop.
- When exercising, drink a glass or two more than you are thirsty for.

INCREASE FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

- Carry an apple in your backpack for a snack or addition to a meal on the run.
- Cut up veggies into bite size pieces to store in the refrigerator. You'll be more likely to eat them if they are prepared already.
- Cook up vegetables in the microwave, steam them or stir fry.

DECREASING DIETARY FAT:

- In recipes, use only 1/2 to 1/3 the amount of margarine or oil the recipe calls for. Replace the rest with skim milk, buttermilk or egg whites.
- Spread jam on toast or bagels rather than cream cheese or butter.
- Try a sprinkling of soy sauce to popcorn rather than butter and salt.
- Use oil sprays (e.g. Pam or Mazola) rather than regular oil on baking and cooking pans.
- Use egg whites or Egg Beaters instead of eggs in recipes (one egg may be replaced with 2 egg whites).
- Top potatoes with salsa or plain yogurt rather than butter or sour cream.

The Ups and Downs of Blood Sugar

Lynn Hedrick

Many times what we eat can directly affect our energy level and our performance in any situation. What goes in your mouth eventually ends up in the bloodstream, and the blood glucose (sugar) fluctuates depending on what type of food a person has eaten.

Glucose is the primary source of all the energy our body uses. Since it is the only fuel acceptable for the function of the brain, our bodies meticulously regulate the level in the blood. If the level goes up too high, the pancreas releases the hormone insulin to lower it. Insulin also stores the excess glucose as fat or as glycogen, a reserve form of the glucose that we use when we haven't eaten in awhile or need a quick burst of energy. If the blood sugar level is too low, however, the pancreas releases glucagon, another hormone, to prevent it from reaching dangerously low levels. This regulation can ultimately create a roller coaster effect with our hormones, which is not desirable for our bodies or our general wellness.

Whether blood sugar is up or down, then, determines our energy level at a particular time. When it is high a person tends to have a lot of energy, but when it is abnormally high the blood becomes almost toxic to the body and hyperglycemia results. At its worst, this condition can cause dehydration, convulsions, or even death, but fortunately is most often diagnosed and treated before it becomes that severe.

Low energy levels, sleepiness, and irritability are common when blood glucose is lower than normal for a person. Hypoglycemia, or abnormally low blood sugar, can occur if the levels are extremely low for a long period of time, and in rare cases can cause brain damage, coma, or death.

Most processed foods contain the hidden sugars that can raise the blood glucose level and cause the release of these regulating hormones. So a quick snack of a "pick me up" candy bar when one feels tired or rundown will definitely cure this feeling — for awhile. The sharp increase of the blood sugar level when you eat the candy bar creates a feeling of energy, but the higher the energy is, the faster it will decrease, leaving you back where you started.

So how do we stop this roller coaster of energy in our bodies? Increasing intake of complex carbohydrates is the most important step, along with decreasing our consumption of sugary, processed foods. Whole grains, legumes, and foods such as potatoes (without the fattening toppings!) provide a slow, regular release of natural glucose instead of a fast burst, which is easier on our bodies and minds since energy is steady and not erratic. Fruit is also a good source of this natural sugar, and is great to eat before exercising so that you won't get tired in the middle of your workout. So next time you want to get some energy, turn to a natural source of glucose; you will find yourself happier in the long run.

If you're interested in learning to cook and eat low fat, natural foods you've probably felt frustrated with where to start. These books contain recipes, nutrition information and advice and tips on how to cook all those mysterious "natural foods."

JANE BRODY'S GOOD FOOD BOOK by Jane Brody

By far the best cook book I have seen as far as getting started on a low fat lifestyle. This is a nutrition almanac, cook book and "How To" guide all in one. Easy, enjoyable reading. Great gift for the holidays.

THE LOWFAT LIFESTYLE by Parker and Gates

Provides recipes for hors d'oeuvres to desserts and provides calorie and fat information per serving. Great choice for the individual on the go who wants concise information and relatively simple recipes.

THE NEW AMERICAN DIET by Conner and Conner

This is an ideal book for those who have high serum cholesterol and are concerned about their cardiovascular health. Also great for overweight individuals seeking low fat advice and recipes. This book directs the reader through three phases of fat reduction, beginning very gradually and reducing fat as one progresses to later recipes. Great for the desirous but hesitant health seeker.

THE NEW LAUREL'S KITCHEN by Robertson, Flinders and Ruppenthal

This is a vegetarian, low fat, high fiber cook book. This is still a good reference for meat eaters because it offers insight on how to reduce meat in the diet to reduce fat intake. Excellent guide for learning to cook legumes and different grains.

Eating Lowfat is a Tricky Business

You're hungry, but you're on a diet. You missed dinner and you want to grab a quick light meal before your 7:00 class. Wendy's is close so you and your roommate run over there. She orders a double cheeseburger, fries and a diet drink.



You know that is a meal heavy in fat and loaded with calories. You choose something nutritious, or so you think. You take the baked potato and salad because you know those are light and healthy choices. And you're right; at least to begin with. You order cheese on your potato for your protein choice. You fill your salad plate with various healthy veggies. Now, to top your dinner salad, you add two spoonfuls of salad dressing, three spoonfuls of sunflower seeds, and a small handful of croutons.

You by-pass the cheeseburger at 800 calories and the french fries at 330 calories for a total of 1130 calories because you knew those were more calories and fat than you wanted at one meal. You wisely chose the potato and salad which are high in nutrients and low in fat.

But what was the caloric value of your meal at Wendy's? Your large potato which started at 100 calories became 700 hundred calories with the 2 oz. of butter (applied without your knowledge), and the additional cheese sauce. Your delightfully healthy salad with condiments rose from 100 calories to between 400 and 500 calories. Your "light healthy" meal contained 1200-1350 calories with 80% coming from fat.

Frustrating isn't it? What can be done? Ask questions at restaurants and in the dorm. "Is this cooked in butter or oil? How much?" Become aware of ingredients and portion size. How big is the serving spoon? Is it level? If not you can count on it being double the serving and double the calories. Don't fool yourself.

Here are some examples of foods in which hidden fats pack a wallop of calories:

- Croissant, 1 largeover 600 calories
- Nuts, 1 small handful.....over 250 calories
- Cheese, 2 oz.....over 200 calories
- Monster cookie, 1.....over 700 calories
- Chocolate kisses, 12.....over 300 calories
- Salad dressing, 3 Tbsp.....over 300 calories
- Tortilla chips, 2 handfuls.....over 250 calories
- Butter, 1/2 stick.....over 540 calories

When digging your hand into a bag of chips, nuts or buttered popcorn, (who stops at one handful?), realize that you may be getting 400 times more calories than anticipated!

Kim Donahey

ALAS FOR FAST FOOD

Fast food is a dietary staple for many college students. Meals are often picked up at local restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dairy Queen, Rax, along with various Mexican and pizza places. The majority of these meals offered are loaded with fat. A new focus on weight management is that high dietary fat may result in a higher percentage of body fat. As stated by Dr. Vash, assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCLA, "The fat you eat is the fat you wear."

Many of these extra fats are hidden within the every day diet, and what may seem to be a healthy choice may in fact be laden with fat. An example of this is the myth of the low calorie salad bar. Without knowing where the fat lurks in the diet, a lean salad becomes a fat salad.

| Item: | Calories: |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1/2 medium head of lettuce | 25 |
| 1 celery stalk | 5 |
| 1 whole carrot | 30 |
| 7 cucumber slices | 3 |
| 3 ripe olives | 15 |
| 1/2 c. marinated beans | 143 |
| 1 tomato | 25 |
| 1 T. sunflower seeds | 50 |
| 1/2 c. garbanzo beans | 113 |
| 1 T. bacon bits | 40 |
| 2 T. croutons | 93 |
| 2 ladles salad dressing | 340 |
| Total | 884 calories! |

Other menu items offered include french fries which range between 10-12 grams of fat per medium serving, with approximately one half of the total calories coming from fat. Onion rings are another menu item offered which on the average contain 16 grams of fat per serving, with approximately 54% of the total calories being derived from fat.

Last year the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) put out a list of dishes you could order from national chains which were nutritionally the worst. The top of the list was Wendy's triple cheeseburger (you must special order this one). This nutritional bomb provides 983 calories, 576 of these are from fat, along with 1280 mg of sodium. Other high fat, high sodium items which topped the "worst" list include: Burger King's Whopper, McDonald's Filet O' Fish, Pizza Hut's Super Supreme Pizza, and Kentucky Fried Chicken's Extra Crispy dark meat. CSPI also includes in its list of the "worst": McDonald's Chicken McNuggets, which contain the fat equivalent of five pats of butter (the porous chicken absorbs the fat it is fried in) which

is twice the fat of a McDonald's hamburger, and Wendy's Cheese Stuffed Potato, which contains the fat equivalent of 9 pats of butter.

This leaves many to believe that the only healthy choice for fast food is Mexican food. However, most of the American-Mexican food is prepared with loads of fat. Not only is it prepared with fat, once sour cream, cheese, guacamole, refried beans (fried in lard), ground beef, and olives are added, it ranks up there with the "worst" list. Many Mexican-style foods derive 75% of their calories from fat. A Taco Bell Burrito Supreme has 457 calories with approximately 200 of these from fat.

The pizza industry has yet to be widely acknowledged as a fat-laden fast food, perhaps because pizza is much lower in fat than most other fast foods. Not only does most pizza contain the basic food groups (containing cheese, meat, vegetables and bread), it is fairly low in fat. Two slices of Domino's 12-inch Cheese Pizza contains 340 calories and 6 grams of fat, 15% of the calories from fat. Both Domino's Pepperoni Pizza and Pizza Hut's Thick 'N Chewy Pizza have 28% of the total calorie content supplied as fat.

Rax seems to hold the top spot at perhaps the most nutritionally sound of all the established fast food chains. It is the first fast restaurant to, on a national basis, adapt to the American Heart Association's (AHA) food guidelines to some of its meals. A bowl of vegetable soup, a salad bar with reduced calorie dressing and a medium sized diet drink is among the complete AHA approved menu, with a total calorie count of 215 calories.

Fast food breakfasts are another high fat fare. Many choose muffins as a "healthy low fat" alternative. However, muffins and donuts often contain the same ingredients as the lunch and dinner times — fat and sugar. An example of this is a Dunkin' Donuts Bran Muffin, containing 122 more calories than a Dunkin' Donuts Bavarian cream-filled donut covered with chocolate frosting. Not only does it have more calories, the bran muffin has about 40% more fat. McDonald's Sausage Biscuit made the "top worst" list by CSPI having 532 calories, and the fat equivalent of 10 pats of butter. The ever-popular Croissant Sandwich with Ham has a total of 557 calories, 67% of them being provided from fat.

Those students eating a diet which regularly contains fast food are most likely eating a diet high in fat. According to food author Paula Dranov, "almost every item in conventional fast food restaurants will undo a healthy diet." And most of the fat in processed fast food is the kind we are warned against the most ardently — saturated.

Daneel Hennagin

Convenience At A Price

Judy Higgins

Planning meals, shopping for food, cooking dinner, washing dishes: all of these things have one thing in common — they're time consuming. College students are especially pressed for time. Between attending classes, studying for hours, working, attending social engagements, and lacking good cooking facilities, college students are easy prey of the convenience of fast-food. Since it is likely that you, as a student, will patronize a local fast-food restaurant at some time — or many times — it's important that you understand the significance of your food choices.

In the United States, food eaten outside of the home accounts for one out of every three food dollars, and over 19 billion dollars are spent annually at fast-food establishments. With this much money being spent in this way, consumers have recently become interested in the nutritive value of the prepared food they are buying. Research into fast-food nutrition has shown some alarming results. Evidence shows that fast-foods are high in calories, sodium, and fat. Even though they show moderate amounts of carbohydrates, it is unclear how much of them are coming from sugar or from starch. Also, most fast-foods have shown to be deficient in fiber and vitamins. On a more positive note, fast-food does supply adequate amounts of protein, iron, and calcium.

The calorie content of a single fast-food meal is approximately between 900 and 1,800 calories. This is equal to 33 to 66 percent of the total daily recommended calories for young men and 45 to 90 percent of the total daily recommended calories for young women. When you consider that at least half of these calories come from fat, it becomes clear that fast-food contributes to the problem of obesity in many individuals.

The evidence seems to be overwhelming — fast-food is not keeping up in the health race. But don't despair!! You can still maintain a good diet and enjoy the convenience of fast-food. Following are a few tips that will help you in maintaining a balanced diet while still balancing a busy lifestyle.

- Keep your visits to fast food establishments to a minimum.
- Chinese food is high in sodium and Mexican-style foods are high in fat. If you have reason to be concerned about sodium or fat in your diet, keep these choices to a minimum.
- Take advantage of the salad bars now offered at many fast food restaurants (but watch the amount of salad dressing).
- If you plan on eating meat more than once a day, choose poultry or fish which is not deep fried or sauteed.
- Avoid french fries, onion rings and other deep fried vegetables. Vegetables and porous and absorb fat.
- Order ice water instead of soda pop or milk shakes. It's refreshing, thirst quenching and cheap.



Did you know????

- 2% milk, 37% of the calories come from fat?
- "Light" corn oil means it is lighter in color than other non-light oils?
- Beef hot dogs contain as much fat as pork hot dogs — approximately 80% of the calories in both of these come from fat.
- Almost half of the dry weight of Fruit Loops, Captain Crunch and Pop-Tarts is sugar?
- A croissant is so high in fat it should be considered a pastry instead of a bread?

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