

Energy in Calories

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A **calorie** is a unit of energy. **Energy** is the measure of how much work something can do.

Humans need energy to survive and move about. They acquire it from the calories in food. The number of calories in a food indicates how much **potential energy** that food can provide.

Foods are usually divided up into **carbohydrates**, **proteins** and **fats**. So if you know how many carbohydrates, fats and proteins are in a food, you can figure out how many calories, or how much energy, that food contains.

A gram of carbohydrates has 4 calories. A gram of protein also has 4 calories. A gram of fat has 9 calories. You can read the label of many packaged foods to find out how much fat is inside.



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calories a person should consume in a day is different for every person. Height, weight, gender, age and activity level all play a part in how many calories your body needs.

There are three main things to consider in calculating the number of calories you need: your **basal metabolic rate**, your level of **physical activity** and the **thermic effect** of your food.

The basal metabolic rate is the amount of energy your body needs to function at rest. Physical activity is activity that uses up calories. It can include anything active from making your bed to jogging. The thermic effect of food measures the number of calories your body burns.

To maintain a healthy weight, you should combine a good diet with regular exercise. Being active and burning calories will help to keep you healthy.