



Healthy Weight Management - *Watching your Calorie Intake*

In addition to following the guidelines in the booklet **Healthy Weight Management - Meal & Snack Planning Basics**, watching the amount of calories you consume may also help you to lose weight.

What are Calories?

Just like a car needs fuel to operate, so does your body. For fuel, your body uses what are called calories. Calories provide your body with energy, and these calories come from the foods and beverages that we consume.

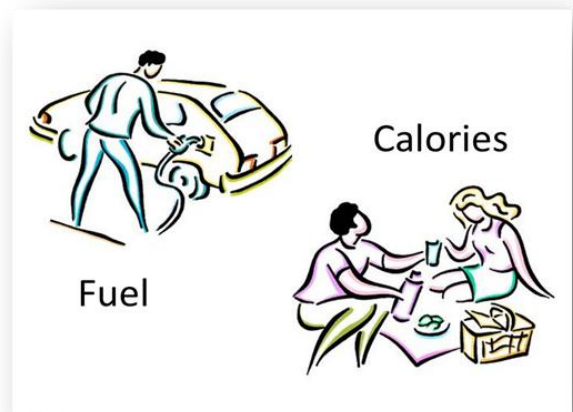
Your body only needs a certain amount of calories a day. This amount is influenced by your age and your gender.

Physical activity can also increase your calorie requirements. For example, if you are very physically active, you will require more calories than if you are not physically active.

If you consume more calories than your body needs, these extra calories are stored as fat tissue. Consuming too many calories can therefore lead to weight gain.

How Many Calories Do You Need?

The meal and snack portion guidelines in the booklet **Healthy Weight Management - Meal & Snack Planning Basics** provide about 1400 calories per day for females and 1700 calories per day for males when **lower calorie** foods are chosen. These amounts (1400 calories per day for



females; 1700 calories per day for males) can be used by many adults as daily calorie intake goals when trying to lose weight. Your dietitian can help you determine your specific calorie requirements. For example, if you are very physically active, you may require more calories.

The following table highlights how many calories are typically consumed for meals and snacks when following the portion guidelines from the booklet **Healthy Weight Management - Meal & Snack Planning Basics** and choosing **lower calorie** foods.

<i>Meal/Snack</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>
Breakfast	200-350 calories	200-350 calories
Morning snack	100 calories	100 calories
Lunch	300-500 calories	400-650 calories
Afternoon snack	100 calories	100 calories
Dinner	300-500 calories	400-650 calories
Evening Snack	100 calories	100 calories
Total Daily Calories	(average 1400 calories/day)	(average 1700 calories/day)

Knowing how many calories you need to consume for weight loss, and watching how many calories you actually consume, can be helpful in a few ways.

1. It can help you determine if you are consuming too many calories for your meals, snacks, or for the whole day.
2. It provides you with some flexibility for diet planning. For example, if you want to eat a higher calorie meal or snack, you can reduce the amount of calories consumed at other times in the day so you do not exceed your total calorie requirements for the day.
3. It can help you compare the calorie content of foods, and identify high calorie foods. Eating too many high calorie foods can make it difficult to lose weight. See the table on the next page for an illustration on how foods can vary in their calorie content.

Comparing the calorie content of “similar” foods



VS



Toast with 1 tsp butter = **120 calories**

Medium muffin with 1 tsp butter
= **400 calories**



VS



1 cup black coffee = **2 calories**

1 medium frappacini with whipped cream
= **500-600 calories**



VS



Medium potato = **150 calories**

Medium fries = **400 calories**



VS



2 tbsp low-fat salad dressing = **30 calories**

2 tbsp vegetable oil = **240 calories**



VS



1 medium apple = **90 calories**

500ml sweetened fruit drink = **250 calories**

How Do You Determine How Many Calories are in the Food and Beverages That You Consume?

There are several ways that you can find out how many calories are in the food and beverages that you consume. The most common ways are listed below.

1. The Nutrition Facts Panel

The Nutrition Facts Panel is found on most packaged foods, and can be a quick way to determine how many calories are in the food and beverages that you consume.

An example of a Nutrition Facts Panel is shown to the right. This panel provides information on the amount of nutrients, including calories, that are in a food or beverage.

At the top of the Nutrition Facts Panel is listed a serving size for the food or beverage. Below that, is listed the amount of calories in that serving size.

The serving size on a Nutrition Facts Panel may or may not reflect the actual portion amount that you consume. Therefore you will need to compare the serving size on the Nutrition Facts Panel to the portion amount consumed. This will help you determine how many calories this food or beverage will add to your diet.

Breakfast Cereal

Nutrition Facts		
Serving size: ¼ cup (30g)		
Amount	% Daily value	
Calories 115		
Fat 0g	0%	
Saturated 0g	0%	
+ Trans 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	
Sodium 150mg	6%	
Carbohydrate 27g	9%	
Fibre 5g	16%	
Sugars 6g		
Protein 2g		
Vitamin A	0%	Vitamin C 10%
Calcium	10%	Iron 25%

For example, the Nutrition Facts Panel shown above is for a breakfast cereal. This Nutrition Facts Panel indicates that this cereal provides 115 calories for ¼ cup of cereal. If you consume ¼ cup of this cereal this cereal will add 115 calories to your diet. If you consume 1½ cups (i.e. a double portion), this cereal will add 230 calories to your diet.

*Tip: refer to chart in the **Meal Planning for Healthy Weight Management** booklet to help you compare a serving size listed on a Nutrition Facts Panel to your hand portion sizes*

2. Restaurant brochures or websites

Many fast-food restaurant chains have brochures available that provide the nutrition information, including calories, for their menu items. These brochures can usually be requested at the order counter.

The nutrition information of these menu items can also generally be found on the websites of fast-food restaurant chains.

3. Food manufacturer websites

Food manufacturers generally provide a list of the products that they manufacture on their websites. This often include product descriptions, as well as the calorie and nutrient information for these products.

4. Online or smartphone nutrient databases

You can also find the amount of calories in a food by using an online (on the internet) nutrient database. There are several nutrient database tools available online. Nutrient database applications are also available for smartphones.

A nutrient database can be helpful in cases where you are not sure of the calorie content of a food. For example, if a particular food does not have a Nutrition Facts Panel, or if you are eating at a restaurant that does not provide calorie information for their menu items, you can search for the amount of calories of the food you are eating in a nutrient database. Some examples of online nutrient databases include:

www.nutritiondata.self.com

www.calorieking.com

www.ndb.nal.usda.gov (USDA nutrient database)

www.dietfacts.com/fastfood.asp (nutrient database for restaurant menu items)



5. Online or smartphone calorie tracking tools

There are several online or smartphone calorie tracking tools that are available to assist with weight loss. These tools are often free of charge.

Online or smartphone calorie tracking tools generally include a nutrient database that allows you to search for the calorie amounts of foods within the tracking tool. With some smartphone tracking tools you can also scan the barcode of foods, which then enters the calorie information directly into your tracker.

Tracking your food and calorie intake using these calorie tracking tools can help you identify if you are consuming too many calories. You may find it helpful to track your calorie intake for a few weeks to help learn where excess calories are being consumed and identify areas in your diet that need to be worked on. For some people, tracking their calorie intake for a longer period of time can also help them maintain their diet plan.

The following are some of the more popular online and smartphone calorie tracking tools for weight management. You can try different ones to find which one suits you best. Your dietitian may suggest a specific tracking tool for you.

www.myfitnesspal.com

www.sparkpeople.com

www.caloriecount.com

