

Eating the Right Number of Calories (2020-2025 Guidelines)



Calories are a measure of the energy you get from food and beverages. You will gain weight if you eat more calories than you use. You should lose weight if you eat fewer calories than you use. Below are tables that give the estimated number of calories needed each day. Look for your gender, age, and activity level. You should stay at your weight if you stick to this number. Note that this is an **estimated** number of calories.* Your exact number may be different.

Women

Age in years	Not active (calories/day)	Moderately active (calories/day)	Active (calories/day)
19 to 30	1,800–2,000	2,000–2,200	2,400
31 to 50	1,800	2,000	2,200
51 and older	1,600	1,800	2,000–2,200

Men

Age in years	Not active (calories/day)	Moderately active (calories/day)	Active (calories/day)
19 to 30	2,400–2,600	2,600–2,800	3,000
31 to 50	2,200–2,400	2,400–2,600	2,800–3,000
51 and older	2,000–2,200	2,200–2,400	2,400–2,800

Activity levels defined

- **Not active (sedentary).** Only light physical activity. This means activity done during typical daily life.
- **Moderately active.** Light physical activity done during typical daily life. But added to this is physical activity equal to walking about 1.5 to 3 miles a day at 3 to 4 miles per hour.
- **Active.** Light physical activity done during typical daily life. But added to this physical activity equal to walking more than 3 miles a day at 3 to 4 miles per hour.

* From Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The estimated levels for women don't include pregnant or lactating people. Ask your healthcare provider about your nutrition needs during and after pregnancy.

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