Estimated Caloric Needs and Recommended Daily Food Group Servings

Estimated Calorie Needs per Day, by Age, Sex, and Physical Activity Level, Ages 2 and Older

AGE	Males			Females		
	Sedentary[a]	Moderately Active[b]	Active[c]	Sedentary[a]	Moderately Active[b]	Active[c]
2	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
3	1,000	1,400	1,400	1,000	1,200	1,400
4	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,200	1,400	1,400
5	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,200	1,400	1,600
6	1,400	1,600	1,800	1,200	1,400	1,600
7	1,400	1,600	1,800	1,200	1,600	1,800
8	1,400	1,600	2,000	1,400	1,600	1,800
9	1,600	1,800	2,000	1,400	1,600	1,800
10	1,600	1,800	2,200	1,400	1,800	2,000
11	1,800	2,000	2,200	1,600	1,800	2,000
12	1,800	2,200	2,400	1,600	2,000	2,200
13	2,000	2,200	2,600	1,600	2,000	2,200
14	2,000	2,400	2,800	1,800	2,000	2,400
15	2,200	2,600	3,000	1,800	2,000	2,400
16	2,400	2,800	3,200	1,800	2,000	2,400
17	2,400	2,800	3,200	1,800	2,000	2,400
18	2,400	2,800	3,200	1,800	2,000	2,400
19-20	2,600	2,800	3,000	2,000	2,200	2,400
21-25	2,400	2,800	3,000	2,000	2,200	2,400
26-30	2,400	2,600	3,000	1,800	2,000	2,400
31-35	2,400	2,600	3,000	1,800	2,000	2,200
36-40	2,400	2,600	2,800	1,800	2,000	2,200
41-45	2,200	2,600	2,800	1,800	2,000	2,200
46-50	2,200	2,400	2,800	1,800	2,000	2,200
51-55	2,200	2,400	2,800	1,600	1,800	2,200
56-60	2,200	2,400	2,600	1,600	1,800	2,200
61-65	2,000	2,400	2,600	1,600	1,800	2,000
66-70	2,000	2,200	2,600	1,600	1,800	2,000
71-75	2,000	2,200	2,600	1,600	1,800	2,000
76 and up	2,000	2,200	2,400	1,600	1,800	2,000

[a] Sedentary means a lifestyle that includes only the physical activity of independent living.

[b] Moderately Active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking about 1.5 to 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the activities of independent living.

[c] Active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking more than 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the activities of independent living.

Source: Institute of Medicine. *Dietary Reference Intakes for Energy, Carbohydrate, Fiber, Fat, Fatty Acids, Cholesterol, Protein, and Amino Acids.* Washington (DC): The National Academies Press; 2002.

US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Health and Human Services. 2020-2025 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at DietaryGuidelines.gov.

Daily Servings by Calorie Level

	Calorie Level of Pattern	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
Food Group	**Serving Size Examples**	**Daily Servings**											
Protein Foods	3 oz cooked meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg; ½ cup beans, peas, or lentils; 1 oz nuts or seeds; 2 tbsp nut or seed butter; 3 oz soy	1–1 ½	1 ½–2	2–2 ½	2 ½–3 ½	2 ½–3 ½	3–4	3 ½–4 ½	3 ½–4 ½	3 ½–4 ½	4–5	4–5	4–5
Dairy	1 cup milk; ¾ cup yogurt; 1 oz cheese	2	2 ½	2 ½	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Vegetables	1 cup raw or cooked; 2 cups leafy greens	1 ¼	1 ¾	1 ¾	2 ½	3	3	3 ½	3 ½	4 ¼	4 ¼	4 ¾	4 ¾
Fruits	1 cup raw; ½ cup dried	1	1	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	2	2	2	2	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½
Whole Grains	½ cup cooked oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, or buckwheat; 1 slice bread; 1 tortilla	1–2	1 ½–2 ¾	1 ¾–3 ¼	1 ¾–3 ¼	2–4	2–4	2 ¼–4 ½	2 ¾–5 ¼	3–6	3 ¼–6 ½	3 ¼–6 ½	3 ¼–6 ½
Healthy Fats	1 tsp olive oil or butter	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	3 ½	4	4 ½	4 ½	5	5 ½	6	7	8

- These serving sizes should align with the recommendations in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030;* therefore, a variety of foods should be selected from each food group. Foods are assumed to be nutrient-dense, with no or limited added sugars, refined carbohydrates, or chemical additives. Individual food choices within each food group vary in calorie and nutrient content per serving, so attention to portion sizes is important. Smaller portions may be appropriate for individuals with lower calorie needs, such as young children or some older adults. Healthy fats are naturally present in many whole foods, and small amounts may also be used when cooking with or adding fats to meals.
    - **Protein Foods:** Animal- and plant-based protein foods, including meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy.
    - **Dairy:** Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or nonfat dairy products, including fluid, dry, or evaporated milk; yogurt; and cheeses. Lactose-free and lactose-reduced products, as well as fortified dairy alternatives, are also options.
    - **Vegetables:** Vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, lentils, and legumes; starchy; and other vegetables, including fresh, frozen, and canned, cooked, or raw vegetables.
    - **Fruits:** Fruits of all types, including fresh, frozen, canned, juiced, and dried fruits.
    - **Whole Grains:** All whole-grain foods and products made with whole grains as ingredients.
- The calories you need depend on your age, sex, height, weight, and level of physical activity.
    - USDA Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) Calculator for Healthcare Professionals*

    * https://www.nal.usda.gov/human-nutrition-and-food-safety/dri-calculator

US Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030: Daily Servings by Calorie Level. 2026. Accessed August 23, 2026. https://cdn.realfood.gov/Daily%20Serving%20Sizes.pdf