Eating for Energy

If holiday parties and round-the-clock cheer leave you feeling a little sluggish, it’s a great time to steer your choices toward whole foods that supply long-lasting energy.

Just as cars rely on gasoline to run smoothly, people rely on food to provide the body with fuel. Energy in foods is measured in units called calories. And while all foods contain calories, some are more high-powered than others – just like regular vs. premium gasoline.

What about sugar? Foods that mostly contain sugar will provide a quick burst of energy, but as soon as your body burns through it, you’ll feel sleepy again and crave more sugar. It’s a vicious cycle.

For ultimate endurance, choose foods that contain fiber and protein instead. These 2 vital nutrients are digested slowly, so they provide a steady stream of energy and leave us feeling full longer. Bonus: Protein also stimulates brain cells to help us feel more alert.

Add high-fiber vegetables, fruit and whole grains to protein choices, including:

- Lean meat and poultry
- Fish
- Greek yogurt
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Legumes

These foods also contain B-vitamins and magnesium, which are required to release energy from carbohydrates.

Scrambled Egg Muffins

2 cups washed vegetables, diced (broccoli, red or green bell peppers, onion)
6 eggs
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
½ cup low fat cheddar cheese, shredded

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray muffin tin with non-stick spray. Add chopped veggies to the muffin tin. Beat eggs in a bowl. Stir in salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Pour eggs into the muffin tin and bake 20-25 minutes. To add cheese, remove the tin from the oven during the last 3 minutes of baking. Sprinkle the cheese on top of the muffins and return the tin to the oven. Bake until the temperature reaches 160°F or a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Serves 6.

Options: Use other veggies such as mushroom, tomato, or spinach instead of broccoli and peppers. Bake in an 8x8-inch pan for about 20 minutes. Add ham or Canadian bacon.

Clever Ideas: Diced means to cut into small pieces (¼ inch to less). Vegetables can be prepared the night before and stored in the refrigerator for a quick breakfast. Serve extras in tortillas or with a green salad and roll for a meal idea.

Nutrition Facts: Serving size: 1 muffin equals: 100 calories, 50 calories from fat, 6g total fat, 0g trans-fat, 2g saturated fat, 215mg cholesterol, 230mg sodium, 3g carbohydrate, 1g dietary fiber, 1g Sugars, 9g Protein, Vitamin A 8%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 8%, Iron 6%
10 Ways to Lose 10 Pounds

Dropping 1 to 2 pounds per week is a healthy rate of weight loss and may help your body adjust to the changes without slowing your metabolism. Plan the first few weeks of your weight loss in detail. Create exercise routines and menus to keep you on track until they’re automatic. Here are some guidelines:

1. **Use the 500 Formula to lose 1 pound a week.** Cut 500 calories a day by using an extra 250 calories with exercise and by consuming 250 fewer calories (such as skipping a fancy coffee drink and cookie).
2. **Avoid keeping** high-calorie, high-fat and sugary snacks at home and at work. Snack on fruit instead.
3. **Aim for 30 minutes of cardio exercise** (walking, biking or swimming) most every day. Get your provider’s okay first, if you’re not used to regular workout.
4. **Keep a food fitness journal.** Record everything you eat and drink to learn your true intake and any eating patterns to avoid. Log in your exercise, too.
5. **Keep moving throughout the day.** Add household chores, stretching and walking breaks to boost your metabolism and energy.
6. **Include strength building 2 to 3 days a week.** It helps build and protect your lean body mass and boost metabolism.
7. **Skip sugary and alcoholic beverages** that can add hundreds of empty calories.
8. **Drink plenty of water,** before, during and after exercise and before meals so you don’t confuse hunger for real thirst.
9. **Avoid skipping meals.** And make sure your food tastes good.
10. **If you see no progress in 3 to 4 weeks,** consult your health care provider, a personal trainer or registered dietitian.

With some dedication, you can adopt these habits for a long and healthy life.

Source: TOPHEALTH

---

**New Year Get-Fit Gifts**

A top gift pick to consider is one of the wireless fitness tracking devices. These packable tools can monitor steps walked, heart rate, and calories in and out all day long. Some of these monitors can easily slip into a pocket or clip onto a waistband. More gift ideas:

- **Pocket diet and exercise journal** – a winning tool for weight watchers who enjoy recording the details of their progress.
- **Resistance bands** – great for muscle training, ideal for travelers or at-home exercisers who don’t have much workout space.
- **Free weights** - beyond dumbbells, check out sandbells or kettlebells.
- **Sports bag** – from fashionable to no-nonsense, and always useful.
- **Lessons** – for yoga, tennis, golf, dancing, skiing - you name it.
- **Personal blender** – for mixing energizing smoothies.
- **Wearable gear** – comfortable, fun tanks, shorts, leggings and windbreakers.
- **Exercise DVDs** - for convenient at-home workouts. Everything from yoga, dance and core exercise to stretching and strengthening for all ages and fitness levels.
- **Exercise floor mat** – a must for Pilates, stretching or yoga.
- **Personal trainer session** – an excellent way to identify and tailor a fitness plan.
- **Green tea gift bag** – nothing like a soothing cup of tea to help folks relax.

No matter what you choose, a gift that raises health awareness is a gift that can last a lifetime.

Judy Groce Neel, Extension Area Specialist III
Nutrition Educator: Kitty Earl