



BUDGETING Total calories

Each person has a daily calorie budget. Calories are units of energy. You spend calories to maintain body functions and provide energy for physical activity. If you take in more calories than you burn, you may “bank” the extra as body fat.

You can divide a calorie budget into essential and empty calories. Essential calories are the minimum calories you need to meet your basic needs. Empty calories are calories from solid fats and or/added sugars. They add calories to food but few nutrients.

The food icon at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov can help you budget your calories. It can help you devise a personalized plan based on your age, sex and activity level.

Try this question

What counts as discretionary calories?

- Foods with solid fats
- Foods with added sugars
- Alcohol
- All of the above

The answer is “d.” All are considered empty calories in your diet. The good news: the new icon allows some empty calories in your personalized eating plan. However, these amounts are small, usually 100 to 300 calories if you are physically active.

Watch out for hidden calories

Foods with fats are concentrated sources of calories. Be careful when choosing these foods because even a small amount of a food with solid fats will add up to large amounts of empty calories. Solid fats usually are found in foods such as:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Cheese | Well-marbled cuts of meat |
| Cream | Regular ground beef |
| Ice cream | Poultry skin |
| Bacon | Many baked goods (cookies, crackers, donuts, pastries, etc.) |
| Sausage | |

Be aware of added sweeteners

Various sugars and syrups are often added to foods during processing or preparation. These add calories without many nutrients. Common foods with added sweeteners include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ▲ Candy | ▲ Regular soft drinks |
| ▲ Cakes, cookies and pies | ▲ Ice cream, sweetened yogurt, sweetened milk |
| ▲ Fruit drinks such as fruit punch | ▲ Sweetened cereals, sweet rolls, cinnamon toast |

To identify added sugars, look on the ingredient label for ingredients such as brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar or syrup.

Choose wisely:

- ▲ Select foods with less fat and less sugar.
- ▲ Watch out for “luxury” versions of foods such as fatty meats or sweetened cereals.
- ▲ Be careful when adding sauces, condiments or other “extras” to foods.

Choose empty calorie foods that you really enjoy, give you satisfaction and you have in a small amount.

For more information on how to figure out your calorie budget, check out

[www.▲ChooseMyPlate.▲gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)

For more information about nutrition, food safety and health, visit

www.▲ag.ndsu.▲edu/food

Try this example

The chart gives a general guide for empty calories. How many calories are estimated for a physically active 32-year-old female? How many empty calories are allotted for her?

Gender and Age	Not physically active*		Physically active**	
	Estimated total calorie need	Estimated empty calorie allowance	Estimated total calorie need	Estimated empty calorie allowance
Children				
2-3 years	1,000	165	1,000-1,400	165-170
4-8 years	1,200-1,400	170	1,400-1,800	170-195
Girls				
9-13 years	1,600	130	1,600-2,200	130-290
14-18 years	1,800	195	2,000-2,400	265-360
Boys				
9-13 years	1,800	195	1,800-2,600	195-410
14-18 years	2,200	290	2,400-3,200	360-650
Females				
19-30 years	2,000	265	2,000-2,400	265-360
31-50 years	1,800	195	2,000-2,200	265-290
51+ years	1,600	130	1,800-2,200	195-290
Males				
19-30 years	2,400	360	2,600-3,000	410-510
31-50 years	2,200	290	2,400-3,000	360-510
51+ years	2,000	265	2,200-2,800	290-425

* These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days.

** These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get at least 30 minutes (lower calorie level) to at least 60 minutes (higher calorie level) of moderate physical activity most days.

Answer: 2,000 to 2,200 calories, with 265 to 290 discretionary calories

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For more information on this and other topics, see www.ndsu.edu/extension

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