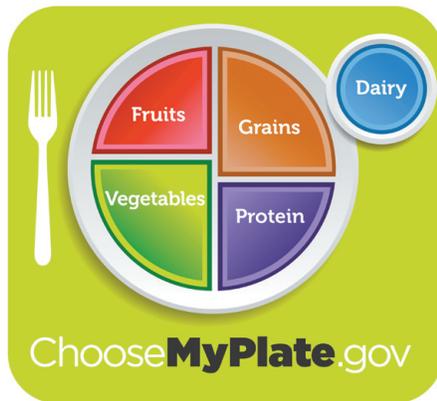


How \$hould You \$pend Your Calorie \$alary?

Alice Henneman, MS, RD
UNL Extension Educator
ahenneman1@unl.edu

USDA'S MyPlate symbolizes a simple, personalized approach to remind consumers to make healthy food choices and be active every day.



Think of MyPlate as a “calorie salary” guide that helps you get the most health and enjoyment from what you eat. Plan calories the same as major expenses — such as a car, house, or vacation.

Four “budgeting” steps follow:

Step 1 — Stay Within Your Calorie Budget

Knowing your daily calorie needs based on your age, gender, height, weight, and physical activity level may be a helpful reference point in deciding whether calories consumed are appropriate in relation to the amount needed daily. However, monitoring whether you maintain

your weight over time by adjusting calories and physical activity is the most helpful.

Be aware that 100 extra calories per day can add up to a 10 pound weight gain in one year! Examples of 100 calories include:

- 2 tablespoons of sugar, jelly, jam, or syrup
- 1 tablespoon of butter or margarine
- 1/3 large (4-inch diameter) doughnut
- 2/3 can of a regular soft drink

David Bach, author of *The*

Automatic Millionaire, popularized the term Latte Factor® to demonstrate the power of saving a few dollars daily by forgoing unnecessary purchases. Over several years, you can save thousands of dollars! The same can apply to calories — by saving a few calories daily, you can save thousands of calories over several years!

Balance food calories with activity level. Recommended minimum levels of physical activity include:

- **Adults:** 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity weekly (i.e. 30 minutes, 5 times/week) OR 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity weekly (i.e. 15 minutes, 5 times/week)
- **6–17 years:** 60 minutes daily of moderate and vigorous activity
- **2–5 years:** No specific recommendation other than to play actively several times each day

Moderate aerobic activity increases breathing and heart rate somewhat while **vigorous aerobic activity** greatly increases heart rate and breathing. If you are short on time, get active 10 minutes 3 times a day.

Step 2 — Choose the Most Value for Calorie \$alary

Get the most for your “calorie salary” by eating more “nutrient-dense” foods.

Nutrient-dense foods and beverages provide vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial

Continued on next page

11 Ways to Get Physically Active Without Going to the Gym

1. Walk up and down the soccer or softball field sidelines while watching the kids play.
2. Replace a coffee break with a brisk walk. Use a rest room further away from your office.
3. Take a brisk walk around the mall BEFORE you shop.
4. Use the stairs as much as possible — even if you don't need anything upstairs or downstairs!
5. Stand while you're on the phone.
6. Walk while waiting for your plane.
7. Get off the bus or out of your car a distance from your destination.
8. Use your exercise bicycle or treadmill while watching TV.
9. Speed clean your house!
10. Take the dog for a walk — don't watch the dog walk!
11. Dance!

from preceding page

substances and relatively few calories without solid fats in the food or added to it and without added sugars, refined starches, and sodium.

Nutrient-dense foods retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. When choosing foods from the grain group, make at least half your grains whole grains.

All vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy, and lean meats and poultry are nutrient dense when prepared without solid fats or sugars.

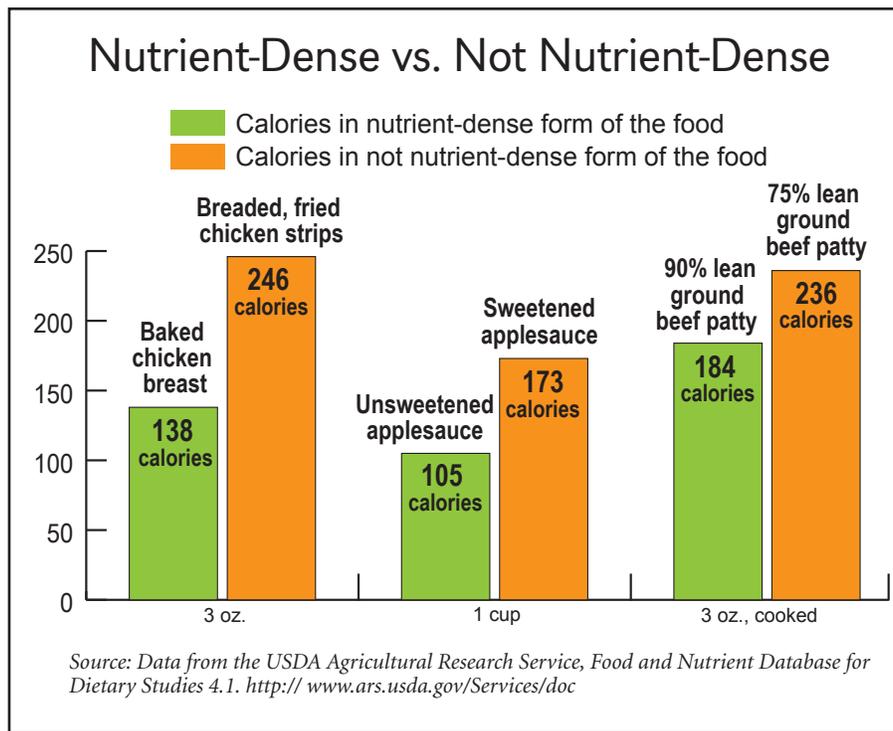
Reducing or eliminating some less nutrient-dense foods saves calories and MONEY!

Step 3 — Consider the “True Cost” of Poor Nutrition

Foods that do little to meet nutrient needs — even if they’re within our calorie salary — can put our HEALTH and MONEY at risk.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat dairy products for persons aged 2 years and older.

Healthy diets may help reduce or eliminate the need for, and cost of, medications for some people. Also, foods may contain additional substances and provide benefits not available from fortified foods, nutrient supplements, and vitamin/mineral pills. Many interactions occur among food constituents (such as fiber, nutrients, and phytochemicals) that affect disease risk. The “Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension” (DASH Eating Plan) clinical study showed:



- fruit and vegetable consumption lowers blood pressure,
- adding low-fat, high-calcium foods to a diet high in fruits and vegetables further lowers blood pressure, and
- even greater reductions occur when sodium intake is restricted.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Healthy eating is associated with reduced risk for many diseases, including several of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.”

Step 4 — Plan a Budget for YOU

Fine-tune what you’re already eating to meet MyPlate guidelines. As you “budget,” choose foods that

taste good as well as are good for you! Spend your “calorie salary” wisely!

References:

- Choose MyPlate at <http://ChooseMyPlate.gov>
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAS2010-PolicyDocument.htm>
- Dietary Guidelines, 2010 at a Glance Slide Presentation, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
- Nutrition Facts, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/nutrition/facts.htm
- Selected Messages for Consumers, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at <http://cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolDoc/Selectedmessages.pdf>
- U.S. Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Department of Health and Human Services, May 16, 2011 <http://geneva.usmission.gov/2011/05/16/sebelius-chronic-diseases-a-growing-health-problem-for-countries-everywhere>

For more information about healthy eating, visit <http://food.unl.edu>

This is a peer reviewed publication