

Good Calories vs. Empty Calories

What is a calorie?

A calorie is a unit of food energy, found in all the different kinds of food that you eat. Some foods have more calories than others, and some foods have better calories than others.

Your body needs calories for energy to do all your daily activities. However, a lot of the processed food we tend to eat contains a lot of *empty calories*. This means that the calories come from solid fats and/or added sugar-so they're not really good for you! They don't have nutritional value and don't supply good energy for your body to use. These foods are calorie dense instead of nutrient dense.

Since empty calories don't have any nutrition for your body, they can end up leaving you hungrier and less satisfied when you eat foods that contain them.

Some examples of food with empty calories:

-cookies -soda -ice cream -pizza -bacon -cake -donuts

It is important to try and limit the amount of empty calories you eat each day, and instead try and eat *good calories*. These calories are much more nutrient dense, which means you are better using your daily calories. You get more nutrients for the amount of calories you are consuming, so you can eat fewer calories throughout the day but still get substance in your diet.

Some examples of nutrient-dense calories:

-fresh fruit -vegetables -eggs -fat free milk -lean meat

To understand the difference, here is an example that shows the difference between calorie dense food and nutrient dense food:

Calorie dense: A piece of white bread

80 calories, 100 micrograms Vitamin E

Nutrient dense: A piece of whole wheat bread

80 calories, 250-500 micrograms Vitamin E

So when you make the decision on which food you should eat, try and go for the ones that are more nutrient dense! You get "more bang for your buck" when you eat better foods and they can help more with your overall health.

