



## Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 Balance Calories to Manage Weight

Calorie balance over time is the key to weight management. Calorie balance means that calories consumed from foods and beverages should equal calories expended in normal body functions and through physical activity. In order to balance your calories, you need to know how many calories are right for you. On the table below, find your gender in the left column and then find your age range in the second column. Now decide on your physical activity level.

Are you sedentary, moderately active or active? **Sedentary** means a lifestyle that includes only the light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life. **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 light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life. **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 light physical activity associated with typical day-to-day life. Look in the column that matches your physical activity level to find your estimated calorie needs per day.

### Estimated calorie needs per day by age, gender and physical activity level

Estimated amounts of calories needed to maintain calorie balance for various gender and age groups at three different levels of physical activity. The estimates are rounded to the nearest 200 calories. An individual's calorie needs may be higher or lower than these average estimates.

Gender	Age (years)	Physical activity level			
		Sedentary	Moderately active	Active	
<b>Child (female and male)</b>	2-3	1000-1200	1000-1400	1000-1400	
	<b>Female</b>	4-8	1200-1400	1400-1600	1400-1800
		9-13	1400-1600	1600-2000	1400-1800
		14-18	1800	2000	2400
		19-30	1800-2000	2000-2200	2400
		31-50	1800	2000	2200
		51+	1600	1800	2000-2200
<b>Male</b>	4-8	1200-1400	1400-1600	1600-2000	
	9-13	1600-2000	1800-2200	2000-2600	
	14-18	2000-2400	2400-2800	2800-3200	
	19-30	2400-2600	2600-2800	3000	
	31-50	2200-2400	2400-2600	2800-3000	
	51+	2000-2200	2200-2400	2400-2800	

The table below shows the top 10 sources of calories in the U.S. by age group. The far right column lists the top 10 calorie sources for adults and older adults. If you eat many of these foods, think of ways you can cut back or substitute lower calorie options. Instead of eating high calorie cake or pie for dessert (No. 1), substitute lower-calorie fresh fruit. What other options might you have instead of dairy desserts (No. 10)?

Think about making these foods from scratch so you can control the ingredients and save money. Substitute beans or peas for all or part of the meat in some meals several times a week. Dried beans and peas are an economical source of protein.

### Top Sources of Calories by Age Group in the U.S.

Rank	Overall, ages 2+ yrs (Mean kcal/d; total daily calories = 2,157)	Children and adolescents, ages 2–18 yrs (Mean kcal/d; total daily calories = 2,027)	Adults and older adults, ages 19+ yrs (Mean kcal/d; total daily calories = 2,199)
1	Grain-based desserts (138 kcal)	Grain-based desserts (138 kcal)	Grain-based desserts (138 kcal)
2	Yeast breads (129 kcal)	Pizza (136 kcal)	Yeast breads (134 kcal)
3	Chicken and chicken mixed dishes (121 kcal)	Soda/energy/sports drinks (118 kcal)	Chicken and chicken mixed dishes (123 kcal)
4	Soda/energy/sports drinks (114 kcal)	Yeast breads (114 kcal)	Soda/energy/sports drinks (112 kcal)
5	Pizza (98 kcal)	Chicken and chicken mixed dishes (113 kcal)	Alcoholic beverages (106 kcal)
6	Alcoholic beverages (82 kcal)	Pasta and pasta dishes (91 kcal)	Pizza (86 kcal)
7	Pasta and pasta dishes (81 kcal)	Reduced fat milk (86 kcal)	Tortillas, burritos, tacos (85 kcal)
8	Tortillas, burritos, tacos (80 kcal)	Dairy desserts (76 kcal)	Pasta and pasta dishes (78 kcal)
9	Beef and beef mixed dishes (64 kcal)	Potato/corn/other chips (70 kcal)	Beef and beef mixed dishes (71 kcal)
10	Dairy desserts (62 kcal)	Ready-to-eat cereals (65 kcal)	Dairy desserts (58 kcal)

**Reference:** Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm>, accessed May 9, 2011.

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