

How Many Calories Do You Really Need?

How many calories do you need to maintain a healthy weight?

To maintain weight, see the calorie chart below. This chart represents calorie guidelines to maintain weight based on median height and weight -- a BMI of 21.5 for females and 22.5 for males – as well as activity level.

To lose weight -- about 1 pound a week -- reduce calories in the chart by 500 a day and become more physically active.

To gain weight, add 500 calories per day for each pound you want to gain per week.

For successful weight loss that you can maintain over time, experts recommend choosing foods that are lower in calories but rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients.

Gender	Age	Sedentary*	Moderately Active*	Active*
Females	19-30	2000	2000-2200	2400
	31-50	1800	2000	2200
	51+	1600	1800	2000-2200
Males	19-30	2400	2600-2800	3000
	31-50	2200	2400-2600	2800-3000
	51+	2000	2200-2400	2400-2800

*Sedentary means a lifestyle that includes light physical activity associated with typical activities of daily living. Moderately active consists of walking 1.5 to 3 miles daily at a pace of 3 to 4 miles per hour (or the equivalent). An active person walks more than 3 miles daily at the same pace, or equivalent exercise.