Healthy Hints

From The Perfectly Powerful Peanut

The Perfectly POWERFUL® Peanut

nationalpeanutboard.org

Nutrient-Dense Foods vs. Calorie-Dense Foods

How do you eat healthy without feeling hungry or deprived? The answer has a lot to do with the balance between the nutrition and calories your food choices provide.

Calorie-Dense Foods

Calorie-dense foods are generally higher in fat and added sugar and lower in water and nutrient content, according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 (DGA).[2] Foods high in water or dietary fiber typically have fewer calories per gram and are lower in calorie density. Sometimes calorie-dense foods also lack fiber that helps you feel full.[1]

According to the DGA, some examples of foods and beverages that are high in solid fats and/or added sugars include many grain-based desserts and breaded and fried chicken dishes. Which foods high in solid fats and added sugars are eaten most often varies by age. For instance, among those 9 to 18 years old, sugar-sweetened beverages and pizza contribute more calories to the diet than among those who are younger. A poor diet and physical inactivity contribute to overweight and obesity and are major causes of chronic health conditions like cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and some types of cancer.

You may find it helpful to review the DGA's Chapter 3: Foods and Food Components to Reduce.

Nutrient-Dense Foods

On the other hand, nutrient-dense foods offer more nutritional benefits per serving without added sugar, sodium, or fat. While they may have the same number of calories per serving as calorie-dense foods, nutrient-dense foods provide more vitamins and minerals per serving.[1] Plus, you may find you eat less of them and are just as satisfied. Other components in these foods, such as fiber, help you feel fuller longer.

Nutrient-dense foods include fruits, vegetables, 100 percent whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats and beans,[1] and unsalted nuts such as peanuts. In fact, the DGA recommends nuts as a food to eat more often, stating, "moderate evidence indicates that eating peanuts…reduces risk factors for cardiovascular disease when consumed as part of a diet that is nutritionally adequate and within calorie needs." Scientific

evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, including peanuts, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. A serving size of peanuts is 1ounce and provides 170 calories.

Recipes

Due to their great taste and their versatility, nutrient-dense peanuts can easily be incorporated throughout your day at both meal and snack times. For recipes visit nationalpeanutboard.org.

Breakfast or Snack:
Peanut Butter Chocolate Cherry Smoothie

Serving Size: 1 cup

Ingredients:

1 cup black cherry juice
1/4 cup peanut butter, smooth, salted
4 oz plain nonfat Greek yogurt
1/2 small banana
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, ground
1 teaspoon honey
4 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa
1 cup ice

Preparation:

Add all ingredients to blender and blend until smooth. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Information Per Serving:

Calories: 182
Calories from fat: 72
Fat: 8g
Saturated fat: 2g
Trans fats: 0g
Cholesterol: 0mg
Carbohydrate: 22g
Protein: 7g
Fiber: 2g
Sodium: 103mg

References

1. Cason, K.L. and Hunder, J.G. Clemson Cooperative Extension. "Nutrient Density." 2006. Available at: http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/pdf/hgic4062.pdf. Accessed on November 5, 2014.
2. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. Available at http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dietary_guidelines_for_americans/PolicyDoc.pdf. Accessed February 12, 2015.