



How Eating More Can Help You Weigh Less

By Julia Helms
April 10 2016

For most people, dieting means counting calories and eating less food. It turns out that eating more can lead to weight loss—if you choose certain kinds of foods.

In the [Nutritionfacts.org video](#) below, Dr. Michael Greger shares the importance of **energy density**: the amount of calories per unit weight of a food or beverage. Foods higher in fiber and water like fruits and vegetables have a low energy density; foods like bacon and cheese have a high energy density.

Eat the Weight to Lose the Weight

Eating a large volume of these low density foods can lead to “happy” weight loss. In [one study](#), researchers were able to cut daily calories in half by substituting less energy-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains for foods like energy-dense foods like meat and sugar. Even though they consumed about 1,500 less calories per day, participants in the low energy density group reported feeling as satisfied with the meals and as full throughout the day as the study participants in the high energy density group.

Learn more about [calorie density](#).

Video Sources

R Pérez-Escamilla, J E Obbagy, J M Altman, E V Essery, M M McGrane, Y P Wong, J M Spahn, C L Williams. Dietary energy density and body weight in adults and children: a systematic review. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2012 May;112(5):671-84.

C J Rebello, A G Liu, F L Greenway, N V Dhurandhar. Dietary strategies to increase satiety. *Adv Food Nutr Res*. 2013;69:105-82.

B J Rolls. The relationship between dietary energy density and energy intake. *Physiol Behav*. 2009 Jul 14;97(5):609-15.

M C de Oliveira, R Sichieri, R Venturim Mozzer. A low-energy-dense diet adding fruit reduces weight and energy intake in women. *Appetite*. 2008 Sep;51(2):291-5.

B J Rolls. Dietary strategies for weight management.

Nestle Nutr Inst Workshop Ser. 2012;73:37-48.

J Wang, W Zhang, L Sun, H Yu, Q X Ni, H A Risch, Y T Gao. Dietary energy density is positively associated with risk of pancreatic cancer in urban Shanghai Chinese. *J Nutr*. 2013 Oct;143(10):1626-9.

C J K Henry. How much food does man require? New insights. *Nutrition Bulletin Volume 37, Issue 3, pages 241–246, September 2012.*

B J Rolls, J A Ello-Martin, B C Tohill. What can intervention studies tell us about the relationship between fruit and vegetable consumption and weight management? *Nutr Rev*. 2004 Jan;62(1):1-17.

K H Duncan, J A Bacon, R L Weinsier. The effects of high and low energy density diets on satiety, energy intake, and eating time of obese and nonobese subjects. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 1983 May;37(5):763-7.

T T Shintani, C K Hughes, S Beckham, H K O'Connor. Obesity and cardiovascular risk intervention through the ad libitum feeding of traditional Hawaiian diet. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 1991 Jun;53(6 Suppl):1647S-1651S.

J H Ledikwe, B J Rolls, H Smiciklas-Wright, D C Mitchell, J D Ard, C Champagne, N Karanja, P H Lin, V J Stevens, L J Appel. Reductions in dietary energy density are associated with weight loss in overweight and obese participants in the PREMIER trial. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2007 May;85(5):1212-21.[/expand]