



## Eating to Boost Energy

Let's face it, we are in an energy crisis. We, as a society, are busy, stressed, need more physical activity and sometimes have poor eating habits — all contributing to low energy levels. One way to improve our energy levels is by eating better. The right combinations of food may help give you a boost. Follow these five strategies to maximize your energy.

### Eat Regularly

Eating every three to four hours may help fuel a healthy metabolism and prevent between-meal hunger that can lead to unwise snacking or overeating at meals. If you only are eating one to two meals a day, this may be an adjustment. As you learn how to eat more frequently throughout the day, remind yourself that you will feel better and be more focused when you have fuel in your system on a regular basis.

### Honor Your Hunger and Fullness Cues

Eating just enough, but not too much, helps to curb cravings and reduces chances of overeating. Keep in mind that portions often are too large. On a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 is starving and 10 is painfully full), try eating to about a 6 level, where you are comfortably full but not stuffed.

### Balance Your Plate

A balanced meal includes foods from multiple food groups: whole grains, lean protein, fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, and fat-free or low-fat dairy. Balance out your plate with all the food groups, along with a small amount of healthy fat, for sustained energy.

### Snacks Are a Bridge

Snacks should have lean protein and fiber-rich carbohydrates to provide lasting energy. Grab an apple and a handful of unsalted nuts; carrots and string cheese; or low-fat Greek yogurt and fresh berries. Keep in mind that snacks are not intended to fill you up, but to bridge you from one meal to the next.

### Remove Energy Zappers

Skip the foods and beverages with added sugars, such as regular soda, sugary coffee and energy drinks. These beverages may leave you buzzing for an hour, but likely will cause an energy crash. Instead, quench your thirst with water, fat-free or low-fat milk, low-calorie flavored water or unsweetened tea.

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## Veggie and Rice Stir-Fry

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup brown rice
- ½ pound broccoli
- 2 medium celery stalks
- 1 medium carrot
- 1 small jalapeño or other chili pepper
- 1 clove garlic
- 6 ounces boneless chicken pieces or firm tofu
- 2 Tablespoons + 2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 Tablespoons canola oil
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger

### DIRECTIONS

- 1 Cook rice following package directions. Set aside. Cover to keep warm. While rice is cooking, make veggie mixture.
- 2 Rinse and chop broccoli and celery. Peel, rinse, and chop carrots. Rinse and mince jalapeño. Peel and finely chop garlic.
- 3 If using chicken, remove any skin. Cut chicken into small pieces.
- 4 In a small bowl, stir together soy sauce, brown sugar, and cornstarch. Add 1 teaspoon of the minced jalapeño. Stir.
- 5 In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add ground ginger and stir. Add chicken or tofu. Cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly browned and starting to cook through, about 2 minutes.
- 6 Add chopped veggies. Stir frequently. Cook until veggies are tender and chicken is completely cooked but not dry, about 5–7 minutes.
- 7 Add soy sauce mixture. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer until sauce is slightly thickened, about 2 minutes.
- 8 Serve over warm brown rice.

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