



## What Are Empty Calories?



### Overview

If you're trying to lose weight, or even maintain a healthy weight, you may have been told to stay away from "empty calories." Nutritionists agree they aren't good for your waistline. But what are empty calories, exactly? And why are they so bad for you?

### Not all calories are the same

Calories are the basic unit of energy in foods and drinks. Foods we consider to be good for you have calories, but they also have things like fiber, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals. These are things your body uses to fuel itself, repair damage and grow new cells. As long as you don't take in more calories than your body needs, these foods are part of a healthy eating plan.

### Empty calories

Foods with empty calories are different. These are things like candy, soda and alcohol. You also may know these as "junk foods." They tend to have a lot of calories, but few (if any) of the other things your body needs to be healthy. When you consume them, your body gets the calories but no real health benefits. And that can add up to extra pounds.

### Conclusion

If you need to reduce calories, start with the empty ones. Cutting these from your diet is a quick and easy way to get rid of calories you don't need. Talk to your doctor for more information about healthy eating.

