

Getting Fat for Just a Bite?

Maybe you know some people who remain skinny no matter how much they gulp down, and some others who claim to have put on weight for just a nibble. For them, maybe they believe that body size is solely governed by hereditary factors. However, doesn't food count and matter at all? First, let's take a look at their food choices.

The table below shows the usual food choices of two colleagues. Even though they took similar amount of foods, their energy intake was completely different!

	Colleague A's usual food choices		Colleague B's usual food choices	
	Food items	Energy (kcal*)	Food items	Energy (kcal*)
Breakfast	A bowl of instant noodles with spiced pork cubes	710	A bowl of rice vermicelli with shredded pork in soup	350
	A cup of Hong Kong-style hot coffee	140	A glass of low-sugar soy milk fortified with calcium	131
Lunch	A bowl of noodles with beef brisket in soup	520	A bowl of noodles with <i>wanton</i> in soup	420
	A plate of blanched vegetables	140	A plate of blanched vegetables (without added oil)	50
	A glass of iced tea with milk	108	Water	0
Afternoon tea	Four cookies	192	Four soda crackers	104
	Lemon tea tetra pak (250ml)	80	Low-sugar lemon tea tetra pak (250ml)	50
Dinner	A plate of <i>Yangzhou</i> -style stir-fried rice	1,200	A plate of steamed rice with stir-fried egg and shrimps	750
	A glass of orange juice	112	An orange	62

Total energy intake in a day 3,202

1,917

* 'Kcal' and 'calorie' are both common units for energy. 1 kcal is equal to 1,000 calories. 'Kcal' is often mistaken for 'calorie'.

The energy intake for the two colleagues showed a huge difference of 1,285 kcal, while an average adult needs only 2,000 kcal a day! It's worth noting that colleague A's food choices (e.g. instant noodles, beef brisket, cookies, etc.) are mostly high in fat and sugar **that often contribute to a high energy intake in our diet without our awareness because of their hidden nature.**



As such, low-fat and low-sugar food choices can help us control energy intake and keep our body weight at desirable range. In our daily diet, we should:

- cook our food by low-fat cooking methods, e.g. steaming, blanching, blanching in stock, quick stir-frying in as little oil as possible, etc.
- choose lean meats and meat-products with a lower fat content, such as pork fillet, beef tenderloin, sirloin, beef shoulder, all types of fish, eggs and tofu
- read nutrition labels to choose products with less fat and less sugar

More info...

An example: a medium-build adult would have to run around a sport field 40 times to burn 1,000 kcal!

To create 0.5 kilograms of body weight, an intake of 3,500 kcal is needed!

Although salt (sodium) in food does not constitute energy, excessive intake will disturb the ideal blood pressure and pose harm to the heart. So we should choose low-salt foods.

To know more about ...

- ✧ healthy eating, please visit 'Health Zone' website at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ 'Health@work.hk Project', please visit <http://www.healthatwork.gov.hk>