

Wellness Letter ~ March 2006

EATING FOR



ENERGY

"To insure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life."

- William Londen



Eating for Energy

By [Sonya B. Angelone, MS, RD, CLC](#)

Lack of energy can be caused by many factors, but what you eat or don't eat can have a profound affect on your feelings of energy or fatigue. Here are a few suggestions to be sure you are maximizing your nutrition potential so you can make the most of your day:

1. Eat breakfast

- ◆ Helps you to be more alert and improves concentration, focus and mood
- ◆ No need to be elaborate – Fruit, yogurt or oatmeal would be ideal
- ◆ Over time your body will learn to expect fuel (food) in the morning and learn not to store calories from the day before to help you get through your morning

2. Eat a small snack

- ◆ Helps refuel your body and help you to stay productive and patient throughout the day
- ◆ Your body needs periodic and regular energy consumption to be able to produce energy

3. Watch the caffeine

- ◆ Coffee or tea may give you the jolt you need to get up in the morning, but rely on it too much and it can actually have the reverse effect
- ◆ More than three cups a day can create a jittery, then lethargic cycle and may also interfere with your quality of sleep

4. Avoid sugary snacks (especially during mid-day)

- ◆ Sugary snacks effects are short-lived since sugar is metabolized quickly leaving you feeling as tired or more tired than before the sugar
- ◆ Try foods with naturally sugars - Fruit or dairy products have fiber or protein, which slows the release of sugar in your body and provides a more sustained form of energy

5. Drink enough fluid during the day

- ◆ Drink plenty of water throughout the day to help stay alert as fatigue is a sign of mild dehydration
- ◆ 8 glasses is standard, but if you had a tough workout or overdid it on the caffeine, try to drink more

6. Monitor late night eating

- ◆ Eating at night may be your body's way of trying to get energy to keep going when it would rather just go to sleep
- ◆ When we rest we feel better physically and emotionally and are more productive in less time

7. Don't rely on energy drinks, bars or pills

- ◆ Most of these products contain carbohydrates, fats or proteins, which are the primary sources of energy for your body and can be obtained from eating real, unprocessed foods
- ◆ Some products contain added caffeine or other stimulants to give you the impression that you have more energy, but you are just feeling the temporary effects of stimulant chemicals

8. Be active

- ◆ If you move more throughout the day you will recharge your battery in a healthier way
- ◆ A short walk will perk you up and leave you feeling more energetic than before

9. Talk to your doctor

- ◆ If you continue to feel fatigued and you think you lead a healthy lifestyle, it may be time for you to make an appointment to see your physician
- ◆ Your doctor can evaluate you for conditions such as anemia or a thyroid disorder, which could be zapping your energy

TIP OF THE MONTH

Cut Your Salt Intake

Reducing salt intake by 5,800 milligrams lowers blood pressure by 5.8/2.5 mm Hg.

People with hypertension, particularly those over 44 years of age should limit sodium intake to about 2,400 milligrams per day. You can lower your salt intake by avoiding canned products, reaching for sodium-reduced soups and other foods, taking the salt shaker off the dinner table and eating less frequently in restaurants (where food tends to contain more sodium, partly because the portions may be large).



