

## Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



LIBRARY  
RECEIVED

Monday, January 13, 1936 - ★  
Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CONVERSATION ON CALORIES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Not so many years ago whenever women got together, the conversation was sure to turn to calories. Counting calories was the fashion. You counted when you planned a meal; you counted when you ate it. And you thought that if you knew your calories, you could never go wrong on diet.

Well, calorie conversation has rather died out lately. The nutrition people have showed us that there's much more to the matter of a balanced diet than calories. And they have showed us that counting calories is only one way to judge whether we are eating enough, too much, or too little -- and not the most important way for the person of normal weight. In fact, the only people who need to take a careful count of calories are the underweight, or the overweight, or others like diabetics who need to follow a special diet. But a general idea of calories does help in planning adequate meals for the family.

To go right back to the beginning, maybe you'd like an explanation of what calories are. What does the nutritionist mean when he says that a moderately active man needs about 3 thousand calories a day and that a moderately active woman needs about 2 thousand 2 hundred?

Well, calories are units of measure. Applied to food they measure its value as fuel for the human body. For example, a slice of bread yields so many calories of fuel value, or energy. A serving of meat, of vegetables, fruit, milk, butter, sugar, each yield so many calories -- and the count of the calories in all the foods that go to make up three meals a day shows whether those meals furnish enough energy or fuel.

But fuel is only one of the essentials. The body must have energy to keep it alive and active, and it gets this energy from food, much as the combustion engine burns fuel to produce the force that makes the engine go. The average man of moderately active occupation uses about 3,000 calories of energy each day, the average moderately active woman uses about 2,200 calories. Therefore they need fuel enough to furnish those calories, and they get it in their food.

Food serves as fuel because it contains substances the body can burn. Those substances are carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. All foods contain one or more of these substances; therefore all foods have some fuel value, but some have more than others because they contain so much more fuel substance. These fuel or energy foods include the cereals and sugars, which are richest in carbohydrates; and butter and the margarines, lard and the vegetable oils, which are concentrated fats. Meat, fish, eggs and cheese, which are the chief protein foods and have various other food values, are also valuable for fuel.



The vegetables and fruits, for the most part, come lower in fuel value, although potatoes have a high-calorie rating because of the starch they contain. Well up in the list come beans and peas, especially soybeans. All of these are rich in carbohydrates, fat, and proteins. Ripe bananas are rich in sugar; avocados are usually rich in fat.

On the other hand, foods that are watery and fibrous, like the greens, cabbage, broccoli, celery, okra, or tomatoes, cucumbers, sauerkraut, rhubarb, summer squash, and various other succulent vegetables, are low in fuel value. Most of the fruits run a little higher than most vegetables because the fruits contain more sugar.

A count of the calories, however, tells by no means all the requirements of good diet. The human body needs food for three main purposes -- (1) to supply the energy that keeps it alive and active; (2) to build, maintain and repair the body structure of bone, muscle and blood; and (3) to keep the whole organism in good health and running order. Nutritionists advise thinking not only of calories and energy foods, but also of the body-building and health-protective foods, many of which are low in calories.

For example, a breakfast of cereal with milk or cream and sugar, bread, butter, eggs or meat, coffee with cream and sugar, and maybe some jam or marmalade, is a high-calorie meal. In order not to pile up the carbohydrates, fat, and proteins, without leaving room for the minerals and vitamins that are not abundant in many of the high-calorie foods, lunch and dinner should include greens, cabbage, broccoli or cauliflower, or a succulent vegetable like tomatoes, and a juicy fruit. These would furnish minerals and vitamins to supplement the carbohydrates if bread and potatoes or sweetpotatoes, the fat and proteins of meats, the fat of gravies and salad dressings, and the sugar and fat of desserts.

In other words, in a meal with bread and butter, meat and potatoes, milk or cheese, you have plenty of energy foods fully provided, so choose the rest of the menu for other kinds of food value.

When it comes to selecting energy foods, here are some points to remember:

The different grains -- wheat, oats, corn, rye -- are about equally rich in carbohydrate and practically equal in energy value. A serving of oatmeal yields about the same number of calories as the same amount of corn meal mush, or cooked whole wheat, or rice, or any of the cooked breakfast cereals, white or dark. No one cereal product can be superior to another in energy value, because the source of the calories -- carbohydrate -- is the same. Whole wheat bread yields the same calorie value as white bread in slices of the same size.

White sugar is pure carbohydrate, and its energy value is about 50 calories to a scant tablespoonful. Butter, margarine, lard and the vegetable fats and oils yield about an equal number of calories each -- 100 per scant tablespoonful.

Milk furnishes energy value in the sugar, fat and protein it contains -- about 333 calories to the pint of whole milk. Cream is almost entirely milk fat and water, its calorie value varying with its richness -- that is, the concentration of the fat. Skim milk has less energy value, because it has less fat. In a pint of skim milk the energy value amounts to about 175 calories. Cheese is a concentration of fat and protein, therefore high in energy value, a 1-1/8 cube of cheddar cheese running to about 100 calories.

The energy value of meat comes from fat and protein, and the calorie value of a serving of meat will vary according to the amount of fat and the dryness of the piece of meat.

That's all about calories today, ladies. And tomorrow is another question-and-answer day.

