What is a balanced diet?

 is one that gives your body the nutrients it needs to function correctly. To get the proper nutrition from your diet, you should consume the majority of your daily calories in:

* fresh [fruits](https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/low-carb-fruits-and-vegetables)
* fresh [vegetables](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/17-ways-to-eat-more-veggies)
* [whole grains](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/9-benefits-of-whole-grains)
* [legumes](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/legumes-good-or-bad)
* [nuts](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/nuts-and-weight-loss)
* [lean proteins](https://www.healthline.com/health/protein)

## About calories

The number of calories in a food is a measurement of the amount of energy stored in that food. Your body uses calories from food for walking, thinking, breathing, and other important functions.

The average person needs to eat about 2,000 calories every day to maintain their weight. However, a person’s specific daily calorie intake can vary depending on their age, gender, and physical activity level. Men generally need more calories than women, and people who exercise need more calories than people who don’t.

## Why a balanced diet is important

A balanced diet is important because your organs and tissues need proper nutrition to work effectively. Without good nutrition, your body is more prone to disease, infection,fatigue, and poor performance. Children with a poor diet run the risk of growth and developemental problemsand poor academic performance, and bad eating habits can persist for the rest of their lives.

Rising levels of obesity and diabetes in America and europe are prime examples of the effects of a poor diet and a lack of exercise. The [Center for Science in the Public Interest](https://cspinet.org/eating-healthy/why-good-nutrition-important) reports that 4 of the top 10 leading causes of death are directly influenced by diet. These are:

* [heart disease](https://www.healthline.com/health/heart-disease)
* [cancer](https://www.healthline.com/health/cancer)
* [stroke](https://www.healthline.com/health/stroke)
* [diabetes](https://www.healthline.com/health/diabetes)