

Smart Food Swaps

Outwit Empty Calories



Eating should be fun AND nourish your body to be strong, and healthy. Everyone needs a certain number of calories to fuel the day's activities. But if you go over your "calorie budget," your body banks those extra calories as fat. Where you spend your calories is important, too.

- **Empty calories ("calorie dense foods")** take up space in your calorie budget but don't provide your body with fuel or energy. Usually high in saturated fats and sugars, these empty calories can add up very quickly.
- **"Nutrient dense foods"** give you the biggest return on your investment. They supply your body with needed vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytonutrients.

There are many tasty, healthy substitutes for higher-calorie foods that don't feel like a big sacrifice. You just need to know where to start. All of these little swaps add up to big calorie savings and nutrition.



Empty calories to avoid

Soda, Koolaid®, fruit juice (even 100% fruit), Hawaiian Punch®, sports drinks such as Gatorade®, specialty coffee drinks like Frappuccinos from Starbucks®, sweet tea, any drink with calories

Tip:

- Drinks are one of the most obvious and easy-to-eliminate sources of empty calories.

Nutritious swaps

Carbonated water, fruit-infused water, Crystal Light® or other sugar-free drink mixes, diet/zero sodas, unsweetened coffee

Tips:

- Water is always the best choice. Aim for 8-10 cups/day.
- Read the label to see if a drink has sugar. It should say ZERO calories.



Empty calories to avoid

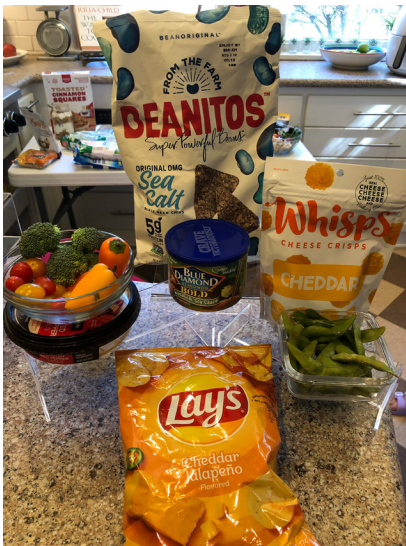
Fruit cups in syrup, fruit snacks, fruit juice, pre-packaged fruit smoothies, jams, jellies

Nutritious swaps

Whole fresh or frozen fruit, no-sugar-added fruit cups in water, unsweetened applesauce, homemade smoothies with healthy protein and fats.

Tip:

- Because fruit juice lacks fiber from its skin and pulp, its sugars digest quickly and leave you feeling hungry.



Empty calories to avoid

Fatty foods such as chips, Cheez-It®, french fries

Nutritious swaps

Homemade trail mix, popcorn, dried fruit, pistachios, pumpkin/sunflower seeds, cheese crisps

Tips:

- Watch portion sizes for all these treats.
- Satisfy a sweet or salty craving with exciting nut flavors: cocoa roasted almonds, toasted coconut cashews, cinnamon roasted almonds, spicy peanuts, salt and vinegar almonds, habanero BBQ almonds
- Beanitos® (serve with salsa for an additional serving of vegetables)
- Veggies with dip (hummus, guacamole, Greek yogurt ranch)
- Homemade fries using baked rutabaga, turnip, carrot, or Jicama
- Cheese crisps (store bought or homemade)
- Edamame



Empty calories to avoid

Skip the drive-through if at all possible! But if you must go, make healthy swaps.

Wendy's® 4 for \$4 (820-1190 calories)

Nutritious swaps

Wendy's® Small chili with cheese, side salad, strawberries, calorie-free beverage (510 calories)



Empty calories to avoid

Candy, snack cakes, cakes, muffins, pancake-on-a-stick, chocolate, cookies

Tip:

- Sweets pack a one-two punch of fat and sugar! They are the second most obvious source of empty calories.

Nutritious swaps

Quick and easy snacks

Tips:

- Chocolate hummus with fruit
- Greek yogurt parfait
- Occasional Skinny Cow® or Halo Top® ice cream treat
- Pineapple bites and grapes rolled in yogurt and frozen
- Balanced Breaks®



Empty calories to avoid

Muffins, sugary cereal (Fruit Loops®, Frosted Flakes®, etc.), Go-Gurt®

Tip:

- Starting your day with sugary breakfast foods can make you crave sugar all day long. Opt instead for fruits with natural sweetness or add blood-sugar-lowering cinnamon!

Nutritious swaps

Try make-ahead recipes for a quick, healthy breakfast or snack option.

Tips:

- Carrot cake waffles with Greek yogurt and fresh berries
- Greek yogurt, fruit, and whole grain cereal parfait
- Overnight banana split chia cups: Add 1/3 cup unsweetened almond milk to 2 tablespoons of chia seeds and refrigerate overnight. Before eating, add toppings such as banana, strawberries, pineapple, pecans, coconut
- Cheese quesadilla: Melt one ounce of cheese on your wrap of choice in the microwave, and dip in salsa.
- Protein bites: Mix one cup oats, 1/3 cup unsweetened coconut, 1/2 cup nut butter, 1/4 cup ground flaxseed, 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips or raisins, roll into balls and refrigerate. (Optional but recommended: add one tablespoon hemp hearts and chia seeds.)



Empty calories to avoid

Ramen noodles, SpaghettiOs®, ravioli, macaroni, other pastas, white bread, rice, pizza crust, potatoes

Nutritious swaps

Zoodles (homemade or frozen store-bought), butternut squash, spaghetti squash, or cucumber noodles.

Brown or wild rice, quinoa, riced/mashed cauliflower, wraps (spinach, whole grain, flax, gluten-free), Ezekiel bread, lavash bread

Tips:

- Whole grain is key!



Empty calories to avoid

Sour cream

Nutritious swaps

Greek yogurt



Empty calories to avoid

Quick foods such as frozen pizza, hot pockets, TV dinners, chicken strips/fries

Nutritious swaps

Pre-cooked rotisserie chicken, fresh and frozen vegetables, fruit

Tip:

- Use pre-cooked chicken to make chicken tacos, chicken salad, etc.