

Empty CALORIES

LOW-CALORIE Drinks



Foods and drinks that contain no significant nutrients but are high in calories are said to have “empty calories.” These are mainly foods and drinks that have a high sugar, fat, or alcohol content, but little or no other nutritional value.

Empty calories are those that come from added sugars and solid fats, as well as some processed oils. These include:

- **Carbohydrate-based desserts**, such as cakes, cookies, biscuits, donuts, muffins, granola bars, and more
- **Sugary drinks**, including soda, energy drinks, and fruit juice
- **Candy bars**, chocolate bars, and hard candies
- **Some meats**, including bacon, sausage, and hot dogs
- **Some condiments**, such as ketchup and barbecue sauce
- **Fast food**, including burgers, wraps, pizza, and more
- **Alcohol**

The added fats and sugars make these empty calories taste good, which can cause people to crave them. Consuming a lot of foods and drinks with empty calories can lead to weight gain and nutritional deficiencies. For example, a person eating lots of empty calories may not get enough:

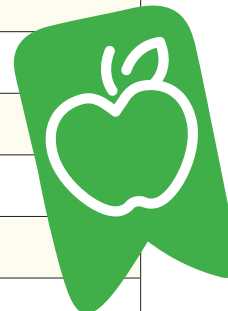
- **Vitamins**
- **Minerals**
- **Protein**
- **Fiber**



| Foods With Empty Calories | Good Substitutes |
|--|---|
| Sweetened applesauce | Unsweetened applesauce |
| Regular ground beef (75% lean) – contains saturated fat (i.e. solid fat) | Extra lean ground beef (95% or more lean) |
| Sugar sweetened cereals | Plain oatmeal |
| Shortening | Extra virgin olive oil |
| Fried chicken | Baked chicken breast without skin |
| Soda, fruit juice, and sports/energy drinks | Water, black coffee, and herbal teas |
| Candy, cakes, cookies | Fresh fruits |

Example Nutrient Comparison:

| | 1 Medium Apple | 1 Cup Apple Juice |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Calories | 95 | 113 |
| Total fat (g) | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Cholesterol (mg) | 0 | 0 |
| Sodium (mg) | 2 | 10 |
| Potassium (mg) | 195 | 250 |
| Dietary fiber (g) | 4.4 | 0.5 |
| Sugar (g) | 19 | 24 |
| Vitamin C (%) | 14 | 3 |
| Vitamin B6 (%) | 5 | 0 |



Low-Calorie Drink Options

- **Water**
- **Low to zero-calorie sparkling flavored water**
 - Sparkling Ice
 - Perrier
 - La Croix
 - Spindrift
 - Hint
 - Bubly
 - Polar 100% Natural Seltzer
 - Hal's New York Seltzer Water
 - Simple Truth Organic Seltzer
 - Zevia
 - San Pellegrino
 - Bai Bubbles Sparkling beverages
- **Infuse water with citrus (lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit, pineapple), melons, berries, cucumber, basil or mint**
- **Sugar Free sports drinks**
 - PowerAde Zero
 - Propel
- **Sugar-free flavorings to water**
 - Crystal Light
 - MiO
- **Black coffee and tea (black, green, herbal)**
- **Low sugar kombucha**
 - High Country Kombucha
 - Ucha Kombucha
 - Kevita Sparkling Probiotic drink
- **Vegetable juice**
 - No fiber, but lower in calories than fruit juice
- **Fat-free/low-fat milk**
 - Range from 90-120 calories per cup but has high amounts of calcium and vitamin D
- **Coconut water**