

Learn about foods that boost metabolism

There are many foods and drinks that are said to increase metabolism - the body's internal reactions to provide energy. In this Honest Nutrition feature, we investigate how our diet affects our metabolism and whether certain foods and drinks actually have a significant impact on our metabolism. metabolic rate or not.

Metabolism is the synthesis of reactions in our cells that provide the energy needed for functions such as movement, growth, and development.

Many factors can affect metabolism, including age, diet, biological sex, physical activity, and health status.

Basal metabolic rate is the energy needed to maintain vital body functions, such as breathing, at rest. This is the biggest contributor to daily calorie burn – also known as total energy intake.

The digestion and processing of food, including carbs, proteins, and fats, also requires energy. This is called the thermic effect of food. Some foods take more energy to break down than others, and this can slightly increase metabolism.

For example, fats require less energy to digest than proteins and carbs. Protein has the highest thermic effect of food among the three macronutrients.

Article summary:

Can Certain Foods Speed Up Your Metabolism?

A person may think that specific foods and drinks can "boost" the metabolism, but this is not necessarily true. Some foods take more energy to digest than others, and some foods can slightly increase basal metabolic rate, but not by much.

It is the total intake that matters most.

For example, the thermic effect of food, the energy required to digest the food, varies depending on the macronutrient content of the meal.

Here is the energy needed to digest macronutrients:

- Protein: 10–30% of the energy content of ingested protein
- Carbs: 5-10% of carbohydrate intake
- Fat: 0–3% fat intake

The body uses the most energy to break down and store protein, which is why it has the highest thermic effect of food.

The thermic effect of food accounts for about 10% of total daily energy expenditure. For this reason, consuming a high-protein diet can help us burn more calories.

Additionally, studies show that processed meals require less energy to digest than whole grains. This may be due to the lower amount of fiber and protein in highly refined foods.

Research has also shown that a high-protein diet can increase resting metabolic rate, the number of calories burned at rest.

A 2015 study found that in people on a high-calorie diet, consuming more protein significantly increased 24-hour resting energy expenditure compared with low protein intake.

A 2021 study determined that a high-protein diet, consisting of 40% protein, resulted in higher total energy expenditure and increased fat burning, compared with a control diet containing 15% protein.

Other studies have also shown that high-protein diets increase daily energy expenditure compared with low-protein diets.

Do specific foods increase metabolism?

It's clear that a higher protein diet can help people burn more calories on a daily basis, but what about specific foods?

For example, compounds in chili peppers, green tea, and coffee may boost metabolism slightly.

Caffeine can increase energy expenditure, so drinking caffeinated beverages, such as coffee and green tea, may boost metabolism by a small amount.

Studies show that consuming green tea catechin extracts can increase daily calorie intake by up to 260 calories when combined with resistance training exercises. It's important to note that most studies in this area have involved taking high doses of green tea extract supplements, and the results may not apply to people who drink only green tea.

Some studies indicate that the natural compound epigallocatechin gallate found in green tea leaves, a catechin found in green tea, has the ability to increase energy expenditure at

doses of 300 milligrams (mg). For reference, green tea contains about 71 mg of the natural compound epigallocatechin gallate per 100 ml serving.

Meanwhile, capsaicin in chili peppers can increase metabolic rate when supplemented in concentrated form. But the amount of this compound in a typical dish containing chili peppers is unlikely to significantly affect metabolism.

In the same vein, one study found that drinking a hot beverage containing ginger powder with meals could slightly increase the thermic effect of foods by about 43 calories per day. But this will not significantly affect overall energy expenditure or weight loss.

How to promote metabolism and healthy body weight

To promote and maintain a healthy body weight, it is essential to focus on the overall quality and macronutrient content of the diet, rather than combining or eliminating specific foods. body.

As mentioned above, research shows that diets high in protein and whole foods can increase energy expenditure, compared with diets low in protein and high in highly processed foods.

Although consuming moderate amounts of foods and beverages purported to improve metabolism - such as spicy foods, ginger and green tea - this is not likely to have a significant effect on consumption. energy or body weight.

A well-rounded diet with plenty of protein and fiber, such as from vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and beans, will support a healthy metabolism and promote overall health.

Adequate physical activity and maintaining healthy muscle mass can also help improve overall energy expenditure.

Resistance training can be particularly effective. A 2015 study found that resistance training for 9 months can increase resting metabolic rate by up to 5% in healthy adults. And a 2020 review found that exercise boosts resting metabolic rate, resulting in an average caloric increase of about 96 calories per day, compared with a control group.

Summary

Instead of focusing on specific foods, anyone looking to boost their metabolism should look at their diet in general. A diet rich in protein and unprocessed foods can help increase energy expenditure, which in turn helps maintain a healthy body weight.

Overall, having a healthy lifestyle that includes a nutritious diet and plenty of physical activity is the best way to support a healthy metabolism. See more :

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