

Words on Wellness

Liquid Calories and Weight Loss



When it comes to managing weight, not all calories are created equal—especially when comparing those from solid foods to liquids. While both provide energy, research shows that liquid calories behave differently in the body and can make weight loss more challenging.

Liquid calories—like those in soda, flavored coffee, alcohol, and some smoothies—don't satisfy hunger the same way solid foods do. Because drinks are absorbed quickly and don't need to be chewed or digested, they often skip the signals that tell your brain and stomach you're full. This can lead to consuming more calories without feeling satisfied or realizing it.

Strategies to Reduce Liquid Calories

- Choose water or infused water instead of sugary drinks, like soda.
- Limit alcohol and sweetened coffee beverages.
- Keep a water bottle handy to stay hydrated and avoid reaching for high-calorie drinks.
- Read beverage labels carefully.

Liquid calories can sneak into your diet and slow down weight loss efforts. You can support your health goals and maintain a balanced diet by making mindful beverage choices and focusing on whole, nutrient-rich foods.

Sources: [WebMD](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4426641/), go.iastate.edu/4H26VH

Peanut Butter Banana Smoothie

Serving Size: 1 cup | Serves: 2

Ingredients:

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 container (6 ounces) vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup nonfat milk
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1/2 teaspoon cocoa powder (optional)
- 1 teaspoon chia seeds (optional)
- 3 ice cubes (optional)

Directions:

1. Cut fresh banana into 4 to 6 chunks. Place in a tightly sealed container or zippered bag. Freeze for at least 4 hours.
2. Place frozen banana, yogurt, milk, peanut butter, and optional ingredients in a blender. Blend until smooth.
3. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving:

190 calories, 4.5g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 5mg cholesterol, 100mg sodium, 33g total carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 16g sugar, 7g protein
This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit Spend Smart. Eat Smart., spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu.



Is It Time to Get Up? The Dangers of Sitting Too Long



Did you know the average American spends more than 6 hours per day sitting? While it might seem harmless, sitting for too long can have negative health outcomes.

Research shows that sitting for too long can increase your blood sugar and blood pressure. It can also make your joints stiff and reduce mobility. It has also been linked to a higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, and even early mortality.

One simple way to protect your health is to take short movement breaks. Experts recommend standing up and walking for 5 minutes every 30 minutes. Studies have also shown that these short breaks can improve your overall mood and energy levels.

Next time you find yourself sitting for too long, stand up, stretch, or take a short stroll. Your physical and mental health will thank you.

Source: [Columbia University](https://www.columbia.edu/~fns1p), go.iastate.edu/FNSIPK

Food Security and Mental Health: How They Are Connected

Did you know that food security can affect your mental health? Food security means having regular and safe access to food. When people do not have enough food, it can affect their body and their mental health. Here is why there's a strong connection between the two:

- Food insecurity is stressful and can harm emotional well-being.
- Not having enough food may make it more difficult to think clearly and manage emotions.
- It's also linked to increased anxiety, depression, and stress.

Overall, not having enough food impacts your physical and mental health. If you or someone you know is struggling with food access or mental health, help is available:

- USDA National Hunger Hotline: 1-866-3-HUNGRY
- [USDA's website](https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/food-security-and-access), www.nutrition.gov/topics/food-security-and-access, to explore resources for food insecurity
- National Suicide and Crisis Hotline: call or text 988
- [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov/mental-health/caring/), www.cdc.gov/mental-health/caring/, to explore resources for mental health

Source: [NIH](https://www.nih.gov), go.iastate.edu/FWWUKP

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If you or someone you know is skipping meals, going hungry, or choosing between food and medicine, call 1-855-944-3663 to apply for assistance today.

Call Iowa 2-1-1 or Iowa Lifelong Links, 1-866-468-7887, for additional resources.



Read the latest Words on Wellness newsletter at: <https://go.iastate.edu/YFOZEN>