## Count It Twice!

By Erin Horner

Your body is growing! Each day you have the chance to feed your body the fuel it needs so that it can be healthy and strong. Your body needs protein, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and grains. Many foods like carrots and grapes are easy to classify. You can count carrots as one serving of vegetables and grapes as a serving of fruit.

Some foods, though, have to be counted twice...and it's not because they're twice as good for you! Some foods need to be counted as a food group serving and as empty calories. Empty calorie foods are foods that contain added sugars or solid fats. It is recommended that girls ages 4-13 and boys ages 4-8 eat no more than 120 empty calories each day. Older boys ( $9-13$ ) can eat a few more but should consume less than 160 empty calories per day.

Any time you add sugar or solid fat to a healthy food, the added empty calories need be counted toward your daily total. Fried chicken, for example, contains protein, but it also contains added fat because it is cooked in melted shortening or oil. One of those greasy drumsticks counts towards your protein
 and your empty calorie totals for the day. A slice of cinnamon and sugar toast is another example. The toasted slice of bread counts as one grain serving. The melted butter and sugar piled on top of it, however, count too. They count as empty calories.

Eating too many empty calories is bad for your health. A few empty calories each day are okay, but be sure to count them and not eat more than the limit. Your body is counting on you to keep it as healthy as possible!

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## Questions

1. Why does the author suggest that some foods be counted in two different categories?
2. What is this story classified?
A. science fiction
B. narrative fantasy
C. tall tale
D. informational text
3. Eating too many empty calories is bad for your health. Which of the following is a synonym for empty in this sentence from the passage?
A. full
B. complete
C. abundant
D. worthless

Date $\qquad$
4. Which of these is a fact?
A. French fries contain empty calories.
B. All empty calorie foods are sweet.
C. A serving of vegetables never contains empty calories.
D. A cookie is the best empty calorie treat.

Do you think that you could go thirty days without eating any empty calories? What do you think that would be like? How do you think your body would feel?

Think about all of the foods that you ate yesterday. Do you think you consumed more or less than your daily recommended limit of empty calories? How could you change your daily diet to make sure that you are not eating too many empty calories? Explain your answer.

