

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

