



Controlling Belly Fat with Food

The Basics

Belly fat! No one wants it. Did you know we have two types of fat? The kind you can see on our bodies is called subcutaneous fat. The kind that is hidden beneath the skin and beneath the abdominal wall is visceral fat. Increased visceral fat around the belly increased the risk for heart disease, Type 2 Diabetes and some types of cancer (colon and rectal).

Eating a poor diet, not moving enough, experiencing stress over the long-term, our age and our genetics all feed into the causes for too much belly fat. How can we prevent it and control it through nutrition?

1. **Eat a balanced diet.** Aim for ½ your plate to be fruits and veggies. The rest of the plate should be spent on lean proteins, healthy fats and a moderate amount of whole grains.
2. **Don't eat too much.** When we eat more calories than what our body needs, we gain weight.
3. **Limit bad fats and sweets.** Sweets can be an easy source of too many calories, which can cause weight gain. Trans fats (hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils) can increase belly fat and redistribute fat from other parts of the body.
4. **Emphasize plenty of fiber.** People who eat at least 10 grams of soluble fiber per day tend to build less visceral fat over time. The goal is 25 grams/day for women and 38 grams/day for men.
5. **Get calcium in your diet.** Research shows that calcium may prevent fat from depositing on your body. Men ages 51 – 70 should have 1000 mg/day. Women ages 51 – 70 should have 1200 mg/day. Everyone over 71+ should have 1200 mg/day. Good food sources include non-fat and low-fat dairy; dark leafy greens; beans; canned salmon; sardines; almonds; fortified foods like cereal, orange juice and soymilk.

Non-Nutrition Lifestyle Habits

1. **Reduce stress.** Chronic stress leads to elevated levels of cortisol in the blood. Cortisol promotes fat deposits around the belly. Think about taking a stress management or resiliency class if you stress if out of control. Practice meditation. Exercise to “get away”. Talk with someone – friends or therapists. Make time for you to relax and re-energize.
2. **Move more.** Cardio and strength training are both good strategies for reducing belly fat. Cardio burns lots of calories at once, which can help in creating a deficit to lose weight (which can include belly fat). Strength training can increase on lean muscle mass which helps us to burn more calories at rest. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least 5 times a week. You can definitely do more, if you'd like.
3. **Catch some ZZZZ's.** Getting the right amount of sleep can go a long way. Studies suggest that people getting at least 6 – 7 hours a night gained less visceral fat over 5 years than those who slept 5 or fewer hours per night.



Chickpea and Broccoli Burritos

Yield: 6 burritos

Ingredients

- 1 large yellow onion
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 large crown broccoli
- 2 (15-ounce) cans garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 - 2 tablespoon low sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- cayenne pepper, to taste
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1/2 lime
- 6 flour tortillas (whole wheat or multi-grain preferable)

Directions

- 1 - Turn your oven on to 425 degree fahrenheit.

- 2 - Chop up onion, bell pepper and broccoli into garbanzo bean size and put it into a bowl. Add the garbanzo beans, oil, soy sauce and spices. Stir to make sure everything gets coated with the spices. Put on a baking sheet (save yourself some clean-up time and cover it in foil) and bake for 20 minutes.

- 3 - Take out the baking sheet and add the garlic. Stir it around and bake for another 15 minutes.

- 4 - Remove from the oven and squeeze the lime over the pan. Stir.

- 5 - Heat the tortillas for 30 - 45 seconds to make them pliable. Build burritos! Add things like spinach, avocado, cilantro and salsa to complete the burrito.

PER SERVING (figured on 6 burritos made with muliti-grain/whole wheat tortillas):

Calories 684; Fat 13 g; Sat Fat 2 g; Cholesterol 0 mg; Carbohydrate 128 g; Protein 26 g; Fiber 16 g; Sodium 597 mg



Southwestern Pasta Salad

Servings: 4

Yield: 4 cups

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup minced green onions
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil
- 2 teaspoons Dijon style mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups whole wheat rotini, cooked
- 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese (or pepper jack)
- 2 tablespoons almonds, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, minced
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed

Directions

- 1 - Combine everything through the salt in a large bowl. Whisk to mix well.
- 2 - Add pasta and remaining ingredients; toss.
- 3 - Cover and chill thoroughly.

Description

Per each 1 cup serving: Calories 295; Fat 8.7 g; Protein 13.9 g; Carbs 41 g; Fiber 3.9 g; Sodium 480 mg



Eggs in a Nest

Yield: 2 servings

Ingredients

3/4 cup uncooked quinoa
1 1/2 cups of water or broth (chicken or vegetable)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup carrot, chopped
1/2 cup sun-dried tomato, chopped
1 large bunch of Swiss chard, coarsely chopped
4 eggs
salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

- 1 - Boil the water or broth in a saucepan. Add quinoa, stir, cover and cook on low for about 15 minutes or until cooked through.
- 2 - Add olive oil to a 12-inch sauté pan and cook onions over medium heat until soft and golden. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the carrots and sun-dried tomatoes and sauté for a few more minutes.
- 3 - Stir in the Swiss chard and cover the pan for a few minutes to cook. Uncover, stir in salt and pepper to taste. Using the back of a spoon, make four depressions in the cooked vegetables.
- 4 - Break an egg into each depression, being careful not to break the yolks (unless you don't like runny eggs). Cover the pan again and allow eggs to poach for about 3 to 5 minutes depending on how runny you like your yolk.
- 5 - Remove from heat. Serve half of rice and two eggs with their vegetable "cup" on top.

PER SERVING:

Calories 584; Fat 21 g; Sat Fat 4 g; Cholesterol 370 mg; Carbohydrate 73 g; Protein 27 g; Fiber 8 g; Sodium 586 mg