

A COMPANION TO MUDDY BRICKS

Food Quality Guide

Understand what your food provides. Compare familiar choices, then build one meal with greater intention. Faithful Fitness, Day 3, pages 11-13.

Carbohydrates

Energy for daily work

Sugars and starches supply glucose for fuel. Fiber is also a carbohydrate, with a different role in digestion.

Examples: Oats, potatoes, fruit, rice, beans

Protein

Materials for repair and function

Amino acids help build and repair tissues and make proteins such as enzymes and antibodies. Protein can also supply energy.

Examples: Fish, poultry, eggs, dairy, tofu, lentils

Fats

Concentrated fuel and cell structure

Fats supply energy, contribute to cell membranes, and help absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K.

Examples: Olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds, salmon

These roles overlap. All three can supply energy. Beans contain carbohydrate and protein; eggs contain protein and fat. A food can do more than one job.

What else comes with your food

Vitamins: Vitamin C helps make collagen. Oranges and peppers are useful food sources.

Minerals: Iron supports oxygen transport; calcium supports bones and muscle function. Think lentils or lean meat for iron, and yogurt or calcium-fortified foods for calcium.

Phytonutrients: Plant compounds include carotenoids in orange vegetables and polyphenols in berries. They are studied for health effects; not all are essential nutrients like vitamins.

Fiber and water: Fiber supports digestion. Water supports body fluids and temperature regulation. Fruits, vegetables, and beans can contribute both.

Learn more: [NIH food basics](#) | [MedlinePlus protein functions](#) | [NIH vitamin C](#) | [NIH iron](#) | [NIH calcium](#) | [USDA phytonutrients](#)

TWO DIFFERENT MEASURES

Understand food density

Ask what comes with the energy. A food can be rich in nutrients and concentrated in calories at the same time. Nuts are one example.

NUTRIENT DENSITY

The nutrients and useful food components you get relative to the calories. Protein is one part of that picture.

ENERGY DENSITY

The calories in a given weight of food. More fat and less water generally concentrate energy into a smaller amount.

Protein foods in context

Food examples	What comes with the protein	What to notice
Skinless poultry, white fish, lean meat	Protein with relatively little fat; different choices supply different vitamins and minerals.	Useful when you want substantial protein with less energy from fat.
Plain low-fat Greek yogurt	Protein and calcium; the amount of fat varies by product.	Usually less energy per gram than hard cheese. Check the label.
Salmon and whole eggs	Protein plus fat. Salmon supplies omega-3s; eggs supply choline.	More energy than comparable leaner options, with useful nutrients of their own.
Beans, lentils, tofu	Beans and lentils combine protein, carbohydrate, and fiber. Tofu provides protein and fat.	Plant foods contribute in different ways. Amounts and preparation matter.
Cheese, nuts, nut butters	Protein together with substantial fat. Cheese offers calcium; nuts also provide fiber.	Concentrated energy. Nut butters supply most of their calories as fat.
Sausage, higher-fat ground beef, fried breaded chicken	Protein with more fat; breading adds starch. Many products also contain substantial sodium.	Usually more energy than leaner, unbreaded versions. Compare similar amounts.

Compare similar amounts and preparations. Lower energy does not automatically mean better nourishment. Choose food and portions for your needs.

Learn more: [MedlinePlus protein foods](#) | [NIH omega-3 fats](#) | [NIH choline](#) | [Penn State on energy density](#)

CARBOHYDRATES AND FATS IN EVERYDAY FOODS

Compare familiar foods

The food itself, how it is prepared, and how much you eat all matter. A shared ingredient or macro label does not make two foods nutritionally identical.

Foods to compare	What to notice
Whole orange / regular orange-flavored soda	Both provide carbohydrate energy. The orange also brings fiber, vitamin C, water, and plant compounds. Typical soda adds sugar energy with little of that nourishment.
Plain baked potato / potato chips	Both begin with potatoes. Chips have less water and added fat, making them more energy dense by weight. Preparation changes the balance.
Plain oats / sweetened granola	Both can provide whole grains and fiber. Added oil and sweeteners often make granola more energy dense. Ingredients and portions vary.
Olive oil / avocado or nuts	All can contribute unsaturated fats. Oil concentrates the fat; whole avocado and nuts also provide fiber and other nutrients. They serve different purposes in a meal.

One bowl with several jobs

Chicken or tofu + rice and beans + peppers + avocado

- Chicken or tofu:** Contributes protein for repair; tofu also contributes fat.
- Rice and beans:** Provide carbohydrate energy. Beans also bring protein, fiber, and minerals.
- Peppers:** Add vitamin C, fiber, water, and plant compounds.
- Avocado:** Adds fat, along with fiber and other nutrients.

Adjust the ingredients and amounts to your appetite, activity, preferences, budget, and individual needs. Frozen vegetables, canned beans, and other convenient foods can help you put this into practice.

Learn more: [USDA food comparisons](#) | [Penn State on energy density](#) | [MedlinePlus protein foods](#) | [NIH vitamin C](#)

PUT DAY 3 INTO PRACTICE

Choose your next meal

Before you eat or drink today, pray and ask God whether this is the best you can do right now with what you have. Use this page for one meal.

Meal I am planning**Date****Protein for repair**

Which food will provide it?

Carbohydrate energy

What fuel fits this meal and my needs?

Produce and other nourishment

Where are fiber, vitamins, and minerals?

Fats in the meal

Include fat already in foods, plus additions.

One practical improvement I can make**What will make this workable with my time and resources?**

Pray: Father, help me recognize the nourishment You have provided and use what I have wisely. Let the care I take with this body help me serve You faithfully. Amen.

For the full video devotional with Coach Alex, join the CORPS at faithfulfitness.co/join. For a broader look at your habits, explore the [Faithful Fitness Health and Habits Profile](#).

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. Adapt food examples for allergies and any nutrition guidance specific to your care.