

Healthy Habits

from Prime of Life Fitness

The Top 10 Sources of Calories in Your Diet

I ran across some statistics this week from the National Cancer Institute that nearly took my breath away. Using data collected in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey ([NHANES](#)), the National Cancer Institute reported the average intake of calories broken out by category of food and demographic variables like age and gender.

The average American woman aged 51-70 in the survey took in 1660 calories per day. Here are the top ten sources of those calories in their diets:

1. Yeast breads 6.9% of total
2. Grain-based desserts 6.3% of total
3. Pasta and pasta dishes 5.2% of total
4. Chicken and chicken mixed dishes 4.8% of total
5. Beef and beef mixed dishes 3.2% of total
6. Dairy desserts 3% of total
7. Quickbreads 2.6% of total
8. Nuts/seeds and nut/seed mixed dishes 2.6% of total
9. Soda/energy/sports drinks 2.6% of total
10. Alcoholic beverages 2.5% of total

Those top ten items account for 40% of the average woman's daily calories. And the really staggering part, in the diet of the average middle-aged American woman, only three produce items made the top 34 sources of calories: fried white potatoes, other white potatoes and 100% fruit juice.

Action item: Keep a simple food log for a week and record everything you eat. See how you stack up against the average woman in your age group (click here to see [data for other age groups and genders](#)). Aim for getting a much higher than average percentage of your daily diet from vegetables and fruits. Remember, 2/3 of Americans are overweight or obese; you don't want to be average!



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