

Energy?

A few key ingredients are all that separate a meal that fires you up from one that leaves you dragging. We show you how to make smart choices. **By Linda Knittel**

ENERGY SAPPING

INSTANT OATMEAL saps your energy, especially if you drizzle it with honey and add fruit like a banana, which scores high on the glycemic index (a ranking of how quickly foods raise your blood sugar). Straight sugar tops the index at 100, and a ranking of 40 is considered moderate, says nutritionist Melissa Diane Smith of Tucson, Ariz. So it's no surprise that **HONEY** (at 58) and a **BANANA** (at 62) can trigger a rapid rise in blood sugar followed by a crash and midmorning fatigue.

QUICK-COOKING OATS have lost some of their insulin-regulating fiber, so they won't keep you going as long as the rolled or old-fashioned variety.

COFFEE reduces the effectiveness of insulin, a hormone that helps regulate your blood sugar, new studies show.

Sweetening your cereal with **HONEY** can make you sleepy.



Break

CERTAIN MEALS, EVEN SEEMINGLY HEALTHY ones, can actually drain you of energy. Your body runs on blood sugar, and it needs a steady supply. The right amount energizes you, while too much or too little makes your energy plummet. Common mistakes, like eating too many carbohydrates at breakfast, force your body to work very hard to balance your blood sugar and this process leaves your body sapped, says Elyssa Hurlbut, R.D., a nutritionist in New York City. But it's surprisingly easy to transform an energy-draining meal or snack into a powerhouse. Here's how. >>

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When to Eat for Energy

✦ Have breakfast within 45 minutes of waking to prevent you from falling into an early-morning energy rut, says Los Angeles nutritionist Derek Johnson, R.D. ✦ Eat snacks midway between meals so your blood sugar doesn't bounce up and down. ✦ Recharge your energy after exercise by eating a snack that contains protein and complex carbohydrates (like apple slices slathered with almond butter) within 45 minutes of your workout.

ENERGY BOOSTING

Choose rolled or old-fashioned oats. Fiber-rich, they slow the release of sugars into your blood, giving you a steadier stream of energy. Add a bit of protein and fat, like a handful of ALMOND SLIVERS, to increase the energizing effect. Top it all off with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of CINNAMON. Researchers say this spice may make your body more sensitive to insulin and better able to balance your blood sugar.

GREEN and BLACK TEA actually help your insulin regulate your blood sugar more effectively.

BLUEBERRIES (as well as peaches and plums) rank low on the glycemic index so they don't trigger blood sugar spikes.

fast



Lunch

ENERGY BOOSTING

Low-fat **CREAMY DRESSINGS** may contain hefty amounts of the sweeteners that elevate your blood sugar.



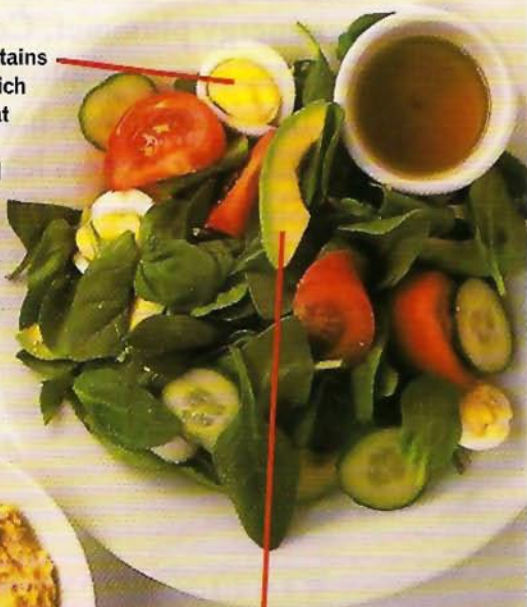
FRUIT JUICE acts like liquid candy in your body because it lacks the blood-sugar-regulating fiber found in whole fruits.

Topping nutrient-dense **SPINACH** with a hard-boiled **EGG**, half an **AVOCADO**, and an olive oil and vinegar dressing provides enough protein and healthy fat to keep you going for hours. The fiber and protein in a half-cup of **HUMMUS** will give you the same energy boost as a roll, without the subsequent crash.



A single **EGG** contains 6 g of protein, which slows the rate that sugars from the meal are released into your blood.

Opt for fiber-rich **HUMMUS** instead of a roll.



The monounsaturated fats in half an **AVOCADO** boost the effectiveness of blood-sugar-balancing insulin.

ENERGY SAPPING

This **SALAD** won't sustain you for long; it contains only carbohydrate-laden vegetables and croutons, no protein, and little fat. Baked goods like the **ROLL** and **CROUTONS**—which are made with white flour and lack fiber—will cause a spike in your blood sugar level and insulin production. You'll feel weary soon after eating.

Morning Snack

ENERGY SAPPING

RAISINS make your blood sugar level skyrocket; they're virtually all sugar. Your body releases insulin to shuttle all that sugar out of your blood and into storage, leaving your blood sugar low again and your energy even lower.



ENERGY BOOSTING

The best snacks include some protein and fat. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of **MACADAMIA NUTS** (a great source of both) to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **RAISINS** to even out your blood sugar and energy levels and satisfy your midmorning hunger.



Afternoon Snack

ENERGY SAPPING

PRETZELS contain less fat and fewer calories than chips, but they're nothing more than fast-burning carbs that set you off on a blood sugar roller coaster. They lack fiber and slow-burning protein, so you'll fade before dinner.



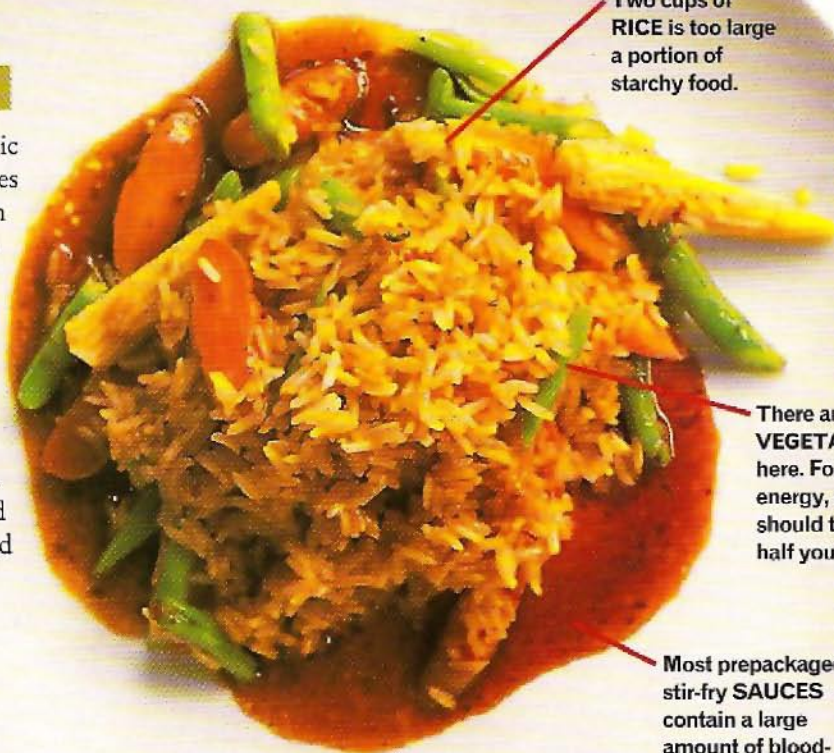
ENERGY BOOSTING

EDAMAME, or soybeans, contain a balance of carbs, protein, and good fat, so your body burns them slowly and you avoid an afternoon slump. Find them in natural food stores, Asian markets, and some supermarkets.



ENERGY SAPPING

Weighing in at 91 on the glycemic index, instant **WHITE RICE** raises your blood sugar faster than almost any other grain. And there's too much here. Starchy foods should take up only a quarter of your plate, lean protein another quarter, and the rest should be filled with vegetables, says Kathleen Putnam, R.D., a nutritionist in Seattle. This meal lacks protein and healthy fats, so you'll be famished and fatigued soon after dinner.



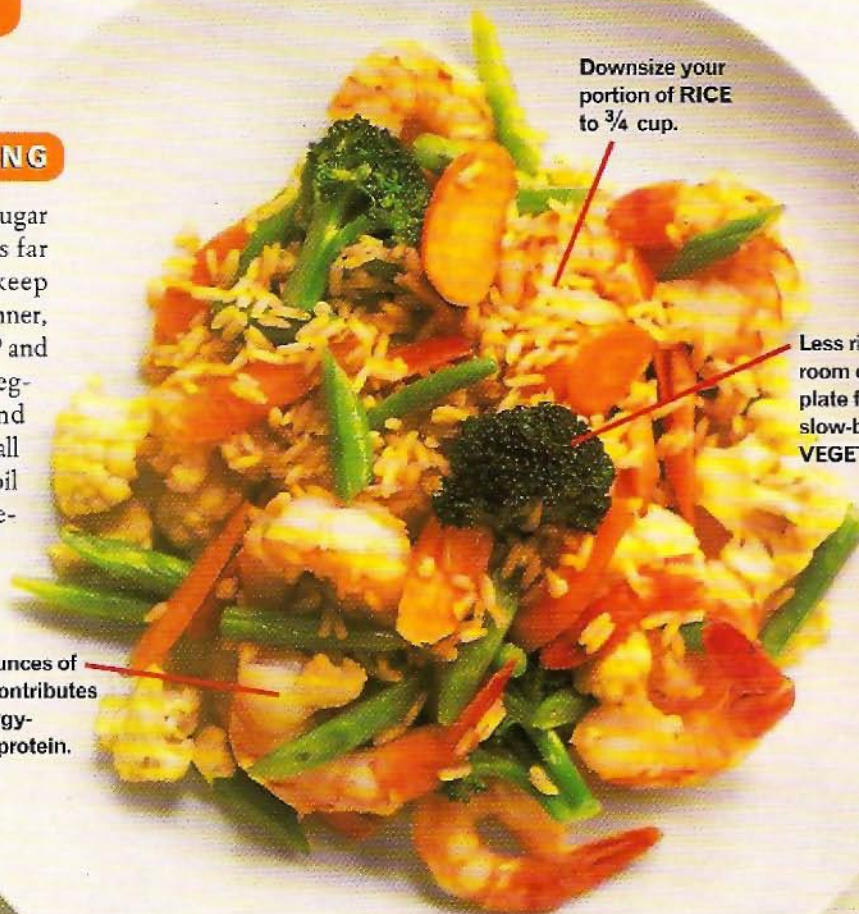
Two cups of **RICE** is too large a portion of starchy food.

There are too few **VEGETABLES** here. For steady energy, veggies should take up half your plate.

Most prepackaged stir-fry **SAUCES** contain a large amount of blood-sugar-raising sweeteners.

Dinner**ENERGY BOOSTING**

BROWN RICE releases its sugar slowly; its glycemic rank is far lower than white rice. To keep yourself from dozing after dinner, add protein-packed **SHRIMP** and slow-burning cruciferous vegetables like **BROCCOLI** and **CAULIFLOWER**, and top it all off with a drizzle of sesame oil instead of a sugar-filled prepackaged sauce.



Downsize your portion of **RICE** to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.

Less rice leaves room on your plate for more slow-burning **VEGETABLES**.

Adding 3 ounces of **SHRIMP** contributes 18 g of energy-stabilizing protein.