

Upgrade your diet

No-stress tricks that can improve anyone's eating habits, starting now

Even though we know plenty about good nutrition, we aren't actually putting the advice into practice, reports a large survey by the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation, an educational group in Washington, D.C. SELF checked out the data and came up with easy tweaks to plug your diet's biggest holes.

Goof You miscount calories. About 90 percent of Americans are unsure of how many calories they need daily.

Get over it Go to SelfDietClub.com; enter your height, weight and activity level. Like magic, your perfect count will appear.

Goof You skip fruit and veggies. Nearly 80 percent of people know these bites help their heart; only half ever eat them.

Get over it Don't obsess over foods to limit (sugary); focus on stuff you can eat more of (produce, whole grains), says [Lisa R. Young, R.D., author of *The Portion Teller Plan* \(Broadway Books\)](#).

Goof You wait until lunch to nosh. Nearly half of those who know eating breakfast is key still skip it regularly.

Get over it Grab a light breakfast bar (we like Luna), a skim latte and a piece of fruit, suggests Wendy Reinhardt Kapsak, R.D., IFIC director of health and nutrition. Or heat a slice of last night's pizza; the point is to eat first thing. —*Marissa Conrad*

Drink one of your daily veggies: Try tomato juice.



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Want chips? Twenty baked ones is a smart snack, or try one of the recipes below.

Light TV munchies

Indulge in one of these tasty, easy-to-prepare finger foods the next time you reach for the remote. They'll satisfy your cravings at 150 calories or less, so every network can be the food network. —*Tula Karras*

Fact or fiction?

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You can eat to beat fat genes

In recent years, research has pinpointed certain variations in our genes as being major contributors to weight gain and obesity. Now two new weight loss guides, *The UltraMetabolism Cookbook* (Scribner) and *The GenoType Diet* (Broadway Books), claim their eating plans can turn off genes that pack on pounds.

Do they work? Sort of. "Because these diets are low-calorie, you might lose a few pounds, but there is no proof that specific foods can alter our genetic predisposition," says Christine Gerbstadt, R.D., a spokeswoman in Sarasota, Florida, for the American Dietetic Association. "Want to try one? Get *The UltraMetabolism Cookbook*. The recipes are healthy, tasty and

TV TREAT	WHAT YOU GET	HOW TO MAKE IT
Crudités and yogurt dip	About four servings of veggies, plus vitamins A and C, which help your immune system fight against germs	Prepare four of each of the following: broccoli florets, carrot sticks, celery sticks and sliced bell pepper strips. To make the dip: Combine ¾ cup nonfat plain yogurt with 2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro and ½ tsp each chili powder and garlic powder.
Spicy edamame	Iron, a nutrient that's crucial in promoting healthy blood cells	Boil ¾ cup preshelled edamame in a small saucepan for 5 minutes. Drain. Sprinkle with ½ tsp sea salt and ¼ tsp chili powder (or garlic salt); toss to coat.
Sweet maple popcorn	Fiber, a waist-whittling wonder that's also good for your ticker	Drizzle 5 tsp pure maple syrup over 1¼ cups hot air-popped popcorn. (If popcorn is hot, syrup will melt and distribute more easily.) Sprinkle with salt, if desired.
Chocolate-yogurt pops	Protein, key for building muscle, as well as	In a blender, puree 1½ cups lowfat vanilla yogurt, ½ cup