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Nutrition Navigators at the Rec, 10/5 @ 4-5:30 PM. Got nutrition questions? Visit our table to get your questions answered!

What Really “Boosts” Your Metabolism?

Eat breakfast, eat smaller more frequent meals, drink green tea, eat spicy foods, take this pill, use this supplement. Heard any of these tips before? There are tons of methods and products that claim to boost metabolism and burn fat, but what's real?

Metabolism refers to all the processes that are continually occurring in your body that are necessary for life. One of its main functions is to convert what you eat and drink into energy. The biggest component of your metabolism is your basal metabolic rate (BMR). BMR is the energy your body uses to maintain functioning at rest and accounts for 60-70% of the calories you burn every day. Physical activity and the energy needed to digest and absorb food accounts for the other 30-40% of the calories you burn.

So back to the question at hand. What really affects your metabolism?

1. Muscle mass: Muscle requires more energy to function than fat, so the more muscle tissue you carry the higher your metabolic rate.

2. Age: As we age our metabolism gets slower. This may be due to age-related decreases in muscle mass.

3. Body Size: Larger people generally have higher metabolisms than smaller people because they have a greater surface area to maintain.

4. Climate and temperature: If the weather is very hot or cold or you have a fever your body has to work harder to maintain a normal temperature and this can increase metabolic rate.

5. Gender: Women are usually smaller than men and have more body fat, so women will typically have slower metabolisms.

6. Hormonal Status: Hormonal disorders such as hyper- and hypothyroidism can increase or decrease metabolic rate.

As you can see, most of these factors are out of your control. Instead of turning to unproven, so-called fat-burning foods or supplements, focus on what you CAN control. The foundation for a well-tuned metabolism is a balanced diet filled with nutrient-rich foods and physical activity. If you need help balancing your diet and/or staying active, Campus Health Nutritionists and Rec Center Personal Trainers are here to help!



CAMPUS HEALTH

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Food and nutrition services (including healthy eating, cooking skills, weight management, digestive problems, hormonal and cardiovascular diseases, and eating disorders) are offered year-round at Campus Health. Call (520) 621-6483 to make an appointment.