

# Get charged up

WE ASKED EXPERTS WHAT FOOD HABITS TO CHANGE IN ORDER TO FEEL ENERGETIC THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Lisa Antao

**M**ajority of us are plagued with lack of energy, tiredness and fatigue as we go about the grind of daily life. Long gruelling work schedule, daily commute, household and family responsibilities take a significant toll on us physically and mentally. Little do we realise our faulty food habits are equally to blame. Experts give advice on how to change our food habits to give us more energy...

**LUKE COUTINHO,**  
holistic lifestyle coach —  
Integrative Medicine

#### OVERCONSUMING COFFEE AT INAPPROPRIATE TIMINGS

Energy from caffeine is not real energy, it is a stimulant. Even if coffee gives a high for a temporary period, it is soon followed by a crash leaving us feel lethargic and tired. Plus, it leaches out essential vitamins, minerals from our body and causes dehydration. Having it right after meals hinders iron absorption and low haemoglobin levels have everything to do with low energy levels. Having coffee close to bedtime can hamper sleep cycle and thus create a need to consume more coffee the next day, leading to a vicious cycle.

#### AVOID CONSTANT GRAZING

Our digestive system utilises about 80 per cent of our body's energy. If it is constantly working and busy digesting food, it is sure to leave us feeling drained. One must focus on decent portion sized, balanced meals after a gap of three-four hours, depending on their lifestyle and health conditions.

#### SAY NO TO ZERO-CARB DIETS

Carbohydrates are an instant source of fuel. A zero-carb diet can be detrimental to our energy levels. It can make us feel drained and irritable at the same time. Rather than going no-carb, prefer going 'low and smart carb.'



Coffee gives a high for a temporary period, soon followed by a crash leaving us feel lethargic and tired

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Eat clean, colourful and home-cooked meals, which have a cleansing effect on the body by which we automatically heal and feel very energetic

**MUNMUN GANERIWAL,** nutritionist and fitness consultant, and founder of Yuktahaar

#### SHIFT FROM EATING INDUSTRIALISED, PACKAGED PRODUCTS TO FARM FRESH FOODS

The fact that processed packaged food products do not go bad or spoil for an extended period of time itself shows that it is dead to begin with.

If we are consuming lifeless foods, we are ought to feel the same. Hence, make wiser food choices. For eg, choose rotis over biscuits (even if multi-grain or high fiber), choose laddoos/ chikkis over chocolates (dark or white), sherbets over cold drinks (even if it's the diet version).

#### CHECK THE PACE AT WHICH YOU ARE EATING FOOD

You may be consuming the healthiest foods, but if you are eating it fast and not chewing it well, then it fails to provide you the nourishment you need. The first step of digestion begins in the mouth. Food that gets digested well is further

better absorbed and assimilated in the body to give nutrients for proper functioning. The end result is that you feel energetic and charged up through the day.

#### AVOID EATING CLOSE TO BEDTIME

The ideal meal gap between your last meal and bedtime is two-three hours. Eating close to bedtime will ensure you wake up feeling bloated, constipated, tired and fatigued. Do not burden your system with digestive work at a time when it is best for the body to work on recovery mechanisms.

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Eating in a hurry fails to give nourishment

**DR DEEPTI BAGREE,** head of department, healthcare, RESET: Holistic Living Concepts

#### DON'T GO FOR SUGARY FOOD OR DRINKS TO GAIN A BOOST OF ENERGY

Doing so, does help getting back the energy levels, but it's short-lived. Frequent indulgence in sugary foods and drinks later gives you a dip in energy and leaves you fatigued.

#### EAT WHOLESOME FOODS

Wholesome foods like cereals, pulses, fibrous fruits and vegetables give more sustained energy preventing fatigue, lethargy and days of low energy.

#### EAT AT REGULAR INTERVALS

Eat food at regular intervals to avoid too much or too little going in the system. Listen to your body as it is the best way to keep food portion under control.

**HETAL CHHEDA,** holistic nutritionist and founder of YOUR HEALTH — Nutrition Clinic

#### GOOD FATS FIRST

Kick start the day with good fats first thing in the morning as it helps curb the sugar cravings and gives so much energy to get through the day. It also stabilises the sugar levels, your hunger hormone ghrelin muffles up and metabolism boosts too. High-carb options do exactly the opposite of this. Natural and unprocessed fats are found in seeds, nuts, olives, avocado, salmon, and coconut products. You can start your day with a glass of warm water with one tsp of cold pressed virgin coconut oil, few soaked nuts and seeds, avocado or one tsp ghee in warm water.

#### EAT CLEAN

Having junk foods that are processed and packaged, make us feel bloated, heavy and tired because these contain preservatives, food colours and toxins. When these enter our body, as a defence mechanism our body forms a layer of fat around it as it's a foreign material. We feel sluggish and tired because of this accumulation of toxins and fats. So, eat clean, colourful and home-cooked meals, which has a cleansing effect on the body and we automatically heal and feel very energetic.

#### INTERMITTENT FASTING

When we eat small meals every two hours, our metabolism goes through cycles of breaking down carbohydrates and turning them into blood sugar. Either this blood sugar is utilised or gets stored in the cells. After this drop in blood sugar, the body's energy and stamina also drops and triggers a "hunger signal" and makes us eat again. This is a vicious cycle. This constant up and down cycle of blood sugar throughout the day stresses our metabolism and results in overall lower energy levels. When we fast, our body uses the energy to heal instead of managing the blood sugar. This results in much higher energy levels and increased immunity as well.

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Nuts are a good source of healthy fats