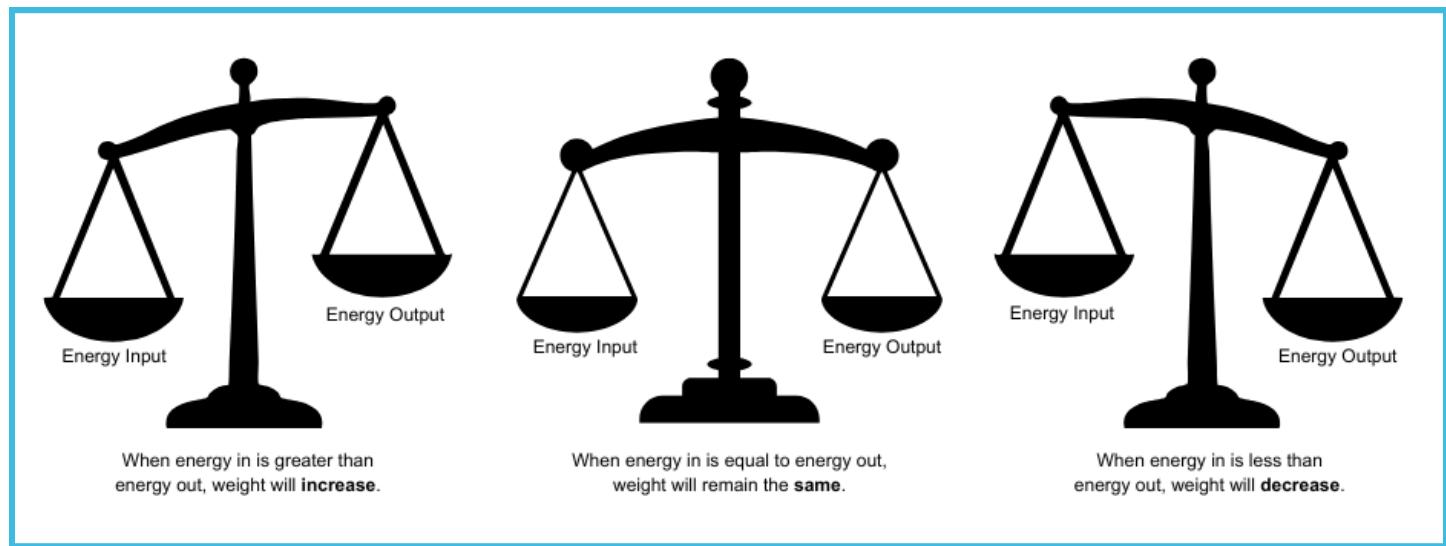


Energy Balance Factsheet

Energy balance refers to the relationship between the energy (calories) we take in through food and drinks and the energy that the body uses for growth, daily activities, bodily functions plus any additional through physical activity.

Maintaining a healthy energy balance is essential for healthy growth, development, and long-term health. Having too much or too little energy in the body over time can impact our growth and our health. Energy balance is achieved through everyday choices in both what you eat and how active you are.

Examples:



What happens if we have too much or too little energy?

Too much energy

- Leads to extra energy stored as fat
- This can lead to becoming overweight

Too little energy

- Poor concentration
- Tiredness
- Weight loss/underweight
- Increased risk of injury

The role of physical activity in energy balance

- Your basal metabolic rate (the amount of energy your body needs for things like breathing, keeping your heart beating, and helping your organs work—even when you’re not moving) generally stays fairly stable, but your physical activity levels can vary day to day.
- Physical activity is the one element of energy output that we can have some control over as we can chose the types of activity we participate in, how we can use active travel within our daily routines, how often we participate in physical activity and how often we carry out active household chores.
- Physical activity can help to increase your energy output which can be important in balancing your energy

What impacts our energy balance?

- There are a number of different factors than can impact on our energy balance including age, body composition, gender and activity levels.
- This means that the amount of energy we need to put into our bodies differs from person to person

- This is why it is important that we don't compare what we eat to what others eat

 **Top tips to help you achieve the right energy balance:**

- Being aware of your portion sizes is essential in ensuring we are consuming the right amount of food for our body's individual energy needs.
- Focusing on eating foods from a variety of different food groups helps to ensure that we are meeting our energy needs whilst consuming a range of nutrients, vitamins and minerals.
- Being mindful of your snacking and trying to aim for no more than 2 x 100 calorie snacks per day can help to prevent over eating.
- It's important to know that energy in and energy out do not have to balance every day. Energy in versus energy out needs to balance out over time in order for us to maintain a healthy weight.
- Physical activity is a key component of energy balance so trying to participate in regular physical activity, active travel and/or NEAT activity is important.
- Stay hydrated. We can quite often mix up the signs of thirst and the signs of hunger, so making sure you are drinking plenty throughout the day can help you to cut down on unnecessary snacking.
- Small sustainable changes can help to get your energy balance right for you without feeling restricted.