Energy and food

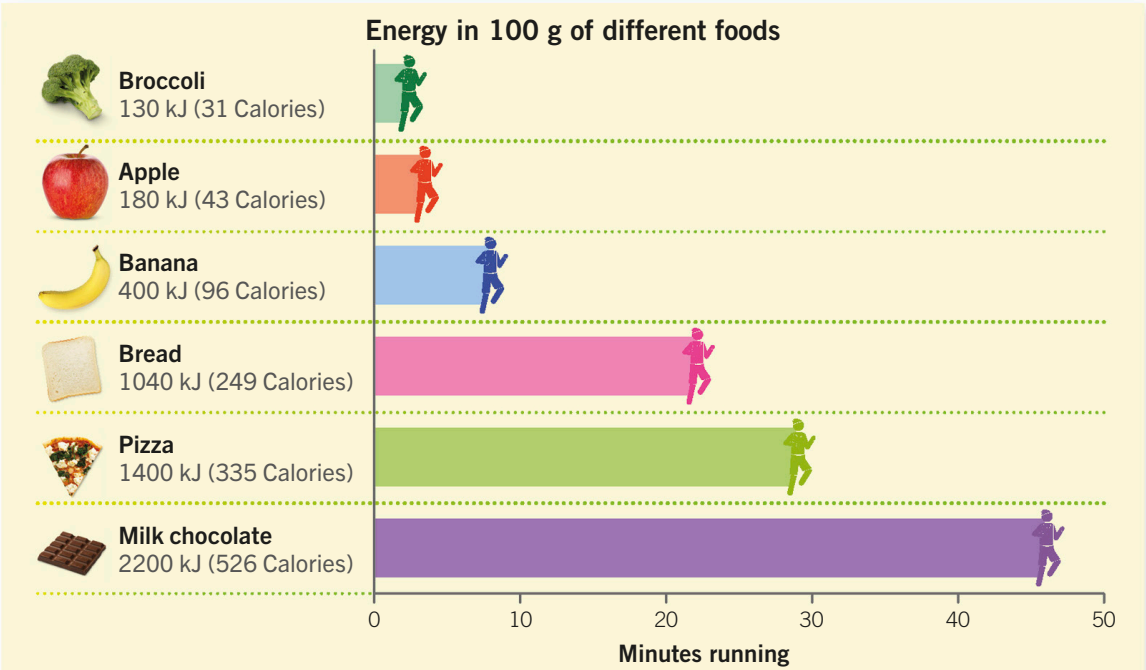
The food we eat supplies our bodies with energy. We measure the amount of energy in food using units called kilojoules.

Key facts

- ✓ The scientific unit for energy is the joule (J).
- ✓ The energy in food is often shown in kilojoules (1 kJ = 1000 J).
- ✓ A person's daily energy requirement depends on their age, size, and level of physical activity.

Energy in different foods

Different foods store different amounts of energy. We sometimes measure food energy in Calories, but the scientific unit for energy is the joule. Food contains thousands of joules, so we use units called kilojoules (1 kJ = 1000 J). The chart here shows how long you would have to run for to use up the energy in different foods.



Energy and exercise

The average adult needs around 10000 kJ of energy a day, but the figure varies from person to person and from day to day. In general, the greater a person's mass, the more energy they need—so adults use more energy than children. How physically active you are also affects how much energy your body uses.

Walking
800–1700 kJ per hour

Swimming
1200–3000 kJ per hour

Jogging
1900–4000 kJ per hour