



Energy foods

We need three different types of food to give us energy.

We need energy to keep us alive, just as a radio needs batteries to keep it working. We need three kinds of energy: immediate energy, energy to keep us going through the day, and a store of energy just in case we have to go without eating for a long while.

Sugar

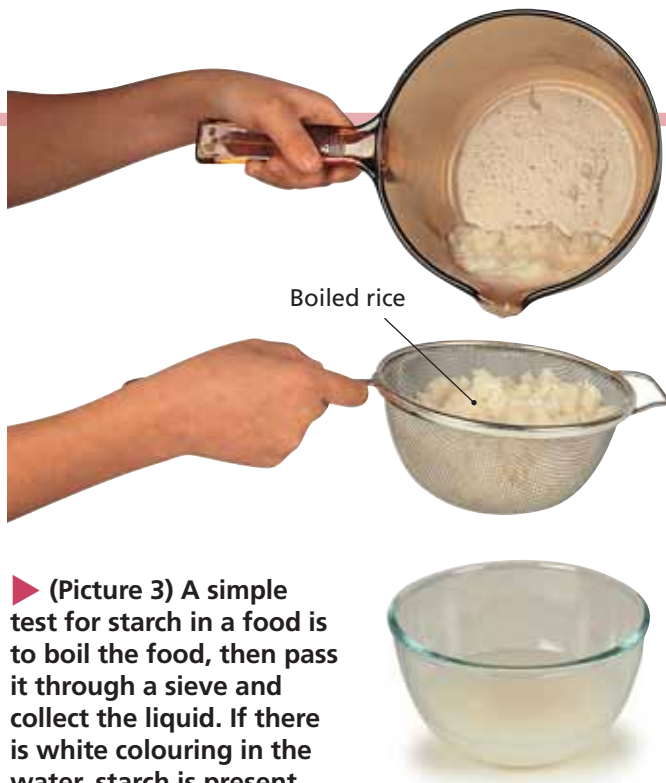
The body uses a special kind of sugar as its source of energy. You might think that we could get all the energy we wanted just by eating spoonfuls of sugar (Picture 1). However, lots of this kind of sugar can be bad for us.

We get most of the sugar we need from a substance called **STARCH**, which is a common part of cereals like rice and wheat and of vegetables like potatoes (Pictures 2 and 3). That is why we should make these kinds of food an important part of our diet.

▼ (Picture 1) Fudge is a source of sweet sugar. Sugar provides instant energy and gives a sweet taste.

▼ (Picture 2) These potato 'ghosts' show you two kinds of high energy foods. The potato 'bodies' are packed with starch, and the raisin 'eyes' are really dried grapes that are packed with sugar.





► (Picture 3) A simple test for starch in a food is to boil the food, then pass it through a sieve and collect the liquid. If there is white colouring in the water, starch is present.

Fat

Fat is so packed with energy that we don't need to store much of it. In fact, just a kilogram of fat, spread thinly around our body, can keep us alive without eating for several weeks. Fat comes from the oils in some plants, but especially from meat and dairy products (Picture 4).



► (Picture 4) Cream contains lots of fat.

► (Picture 5) The juices from cooked meat are high in fat.



You should not eat too much fat. At the same time, most people do not want to stop eating meat. However, lean meat has much less extra fat, and this is the kind most people prefer nowadays.

Many foods give out fat during cooking (Picture 5), so if this is poured away before eating the food (and not mixed with gravy or sauces), you can easily lower the amount of fat you eat.

About four per cent of whole milk is fat, but semi-skimmed milk is only two per cent fat. So, just by changing to semi-skimmed milk, you can eat less fat.

Summary

- We take in energy from food as sugar, as starch and as fat.
- Sugary foods can give a rapid burst of energy.
- Fat is used as a long-term reserve of energy.
- Starch is our main supply of energy.