



AMANDA THUL, RD, LD
HCMH DIETITIAN

Making salads a complete meal

Amanda Thul, RD, LD

If I were to ask you to list 5 healthy meals, I bet salads would be close to, if not at, the top. Salads do offer a lot for nutrition-fiber and lots of vitamins and minerals so there is no question as to why it's such a healthy food. The common complaint though is short lasting satiety. Meaning, usually within 1-2 hours of eating a salad as a meal people complain of being hungry again. Depending on what you add to your salad, they usually are pretty low in carbs and protein. Carbohydrates are our bodies preferred source of fuel and give us energy to keep us going during the day. Protein, along with fiber, helps our bodies slowly digest our meal. This helps our blood sugar from spiking after meals and also keeping us fuller for longer. So with the combo of low carbs and low protein, whatever energy we do get from a salad, our bodies burn through it pretty quickly. It's no wonder our bodies are asking for us to eat again in an hour or 2....It needs to be refueled again! I have some ways to boost your salad to make it an even healthier meal.

Base: Start with your favorite greens (spinach, lettuce, kale, cabbage...etc) or grab one of the premixed salad kits that are made with a variety of greens

Veggies: add chopped veggies you enjoy. Carrots, onions, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, beets, artichokes, red onion, peas, olives...to just name a few!

Protein: Chicken, beef, shrimp, cottage cheese, boiled egg, canned tuna, cheese, chickpeas, salmon, black beans. Aim for a total of 3-4 ounces.

Carbs: Quinoa, rice, sweet potatoes, corn, pasta, barley (or grab a whole wheat roll for the side). Fruit like apple slices, berries, canned mandarins, dried fruit

Crunch/flavor: for some extra crunch add seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, chia seeds) or nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans, cashews). Top with your favorite dressing to add some delicious flavor!

Now you've got a salad that's packed with good nutrition AND fuel for your body.