

Revitalize Your Recipes for Better Health

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The times are changing and you like to keep in step. You jazz up your wardrobe to be in style and redecorate your home for a more contemporary look. But when it comes to the foods you eat and serve your family, chances are you are using the same old recipes heavy on fat, sugar and salt.

Why not update and revitalize those recipes? Learn to prepare your old family favorites in new, more healthful ways. Keep in step with the trend toward leaner, lighter foods. How do you do this? It's a simple matter of modification.

Why Should You Modify a Recipe?

The link between diet and health is important. Food alone cannot make you healthy, but good eating habits based on variety and moderation can help keep you healthy and even improve your health. Good eating habits involve knowing how to prepare and select foods that fit into the Dietary Guidelines.

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services have suggested the following Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

- A** Aim for fitness.
- B** Build a healthy base.
- C** Choose sensibly.

Aim for fitness

- ▲ Aim for a healthy weight.
- ▲ Be physically active each day.

Build a healthy base

- Let the pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat.

Choose sensibly

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

The guidelines do not apply to people who need special diets because of diseases or conditions that interfere with normal nutrition requirements. These people need special instructions from a registered dietitian or doctor. Most of us, however, could benefit by modifying what we already eat. One way to modify your diet is to make adjustments in the types and amounts of ingredients in recipes so that the end result is just as satisfying but fits better within the Dietary Guidelines.

Very few recipes need to be followed exactly to assure a good quality product. How many times have you followed a recipe but added bits of leftovers, substituted ingredients or left out an ingredient because you didn't have it on hand? The end result was probably as good as, if not better than, the original. Your chances for success are best if you understand when and how to modify recipes.

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When Should You Modify a Recipe?

Not all recipes need to be modified. Consider the following questions.

1. Is the recipe already low in fat, cholesterol, sugar or salt?

If so, only minor or no changes may be needed. For example, if a recipe calls for an egg, and the dish serves 8 people, the amount of cholesterol per serving is already fairly low.

2. How often do you eat the food?

If you make a certain dish only once or twice a year or for special occasions, it is not as important to modify that recipe as it is for foods you eat more frequently. For example, it's more important to cut down on the fat in your weekly tuna fish salad sandwich than it is to cut down on the fat in your birthday cake.

3. How much of the food do you eat?

Sometimes the best way to modify your intake of a certain food is to eat less of it. Decreasing the quantity you eat may be more satisfying than decreasing the quality. For example, many people prefer to eat less of a real jam or jelly than to eat the regular amount of a low-sugar jam. Or if you really enjoy a traditional pie crust, perhaps you are better off using a standard recipe and making a one-crust pie or a lower-fat filling, or eating a smaller piece.

How Do You Modify a Recipe?

First, define your dietary goal. If you want to cut calories, you need to know what ingredients contribute the most calories. If you want to cut fat, sugar or sodium, or to increase fiber, you need to identify the ingredients that contain these components.

Calories: Fat is the most concentrated source of calories. Each gram of fat supplies 9 calories, compared with 4 calories per gram of protein or carbohydrate and 7 calories per gram of alcohol. Reducing the amount of fat in a recipe is the most effective way to cut calories.

Fat: Fatty acids are the basic chemical units in fat. They are either saturated, monounsaturated, or polyunsaturated. All fats in foods are mixtures of these fatty acids.

Saturated fats are found in the largest proportions in fats of animal origin such as whole milk, cream, cheese, butter, meat and poultry. They also occur in large amounts in coconut oil and palm kernel oil.

Monounsaturated fats are found in large amounts in olive oil and peanut oil, as well as in many margarines and solid vegetable shortenings.

Polyunsaturated fats are found in the largest proportions in fats of plant origin such as liquid vegetable oils (safflower, sunflower, corn, cottonseed and soybean) and margarines and salad dressings made from them.

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance found only in foods of animal origin. Significant sources include egg yolks, organ meats, butter, cream, cheese and whole milk.

Sugar comes in many forms including white sugar, brown sugar, honey, corn syrup, molasses and maple syrup.

Sodium is found in salt (salt is 40 percent sodium); leavening agents (baking soda and baking powder); monosodium glutamate (MSG); condiments such as soy sauce, bouillon, pickles and olives; cured meats; many canned vegetables and frozen dinners; and most cheeses, sauces, soups and salad dressings.

Fiber is found in whole grain breads and cereals, dry beans and peas, nuts and seeds, and fruits and vegetables, especially those with edible skins or seeds. Once you have identified the ingredient(s) in your recipe you want to modify, you can:

1. Eliminate it completely, or
2. Reduce the amount, or
3. Substitute a more nutritionally acceptable ingredient

To choose the best approach, it's helpful to have a general idea of the function of the ingredient and what will happen if you modify it.

Fat

- Provides flavor and richness
- Improves texture and tenderness in baked goods
- Promotes flakiness and lightness

Eggs

- Provide structure and tenderness
- Act as a thickener and emulsifier
- Act as leavening agents when beaten

Sugar

- Provides flavor and volume
- Improves texture
- Increases tenderness and browning in baked goods
- Acts as a preservative in jams, jellies and pickles
- Acts as food for yeast

Sodium

- Provides flavor
- Acts as a preservative in cured meats and in brined vegetables such as pickles and sauerkraut
- Controls action of yeast

HANDY FACTS*

	Calories	Total Fat g	Saturated Fat g	Mono-unsaturated Fat g	Poly-unsaturated Fat g	Cholesterol mg
Values for 1 tablespoon						
Vegetable oil	125	14	1.8	3.4	8.2	0
Vegetable shortening	115	13	3.3	5.8	3.4	0
Butter	100	11	7.1	3.3	0.4	31
Margarine	100	11	2.2	5.0	3.6	0
Reduced-calorie margarine	50	5	1.1	2.2	1.9	0
Mayonnaise	100	11	1.7	3.2	5.8	8
Reduced-calorie mayonnaise	35	3	0.5	0.7	1.6	4
White sugar	45	0	0	0	0	0
Honey	65	0	0	0	0	0
Values for 1 cup						
Whole milk	150	8	5.1	2.4	0.3	33
Low-fat milk	120	5	2.9	1.4	0.2	18
Skim milk	85	Tr	0.3	0.1	Tr	4
Half-and-half	315	28	17.3	8.0	1.0	89
Evaporated skim milk	200	1	0.3	0.2	Tr	9
Sour cream	495	48	30.0	13.9	1.8	102
Plain low-fat yogurt	145	4	2.3	1.0	0.1	14
Plain non-fat yogurt	125	Tr	0.3	0.1	Tr	4
Values for						
1 whole egg	80	6	1.7	2.2	0.7	274
2 egg whites	30	Tr	0	0	0	0

*Values are approximate. Check product labels for nutritional values of specific brands. Tr = trace

Hints for Healthy Home Cooking

Here are a few ways to update your recipes. These suggestions can be applied to most foods except those in which specific proportions of ingredients are essential to prevent spoilage (such as cured meats, pickles, jams and jellies) or are needed to ensure a standard quality product (such as yeast breads, cakes and pie crusts).

To Decrease Total Fat and Calories

- Try reducing fat by one-fourth to one-third in baked products. For example, if a recipe calls for 1 cup of oil, try 2/3 cup. This works best in quick breads, muffins and cookies. It may not work as well for cakes.
- In casseroles and main dishes, cut back or even eliminate added fat. For example, browning meat in added fat is unnecessary because some fat will drain from the meat as it cooks. Use a nonstick pan or cooking spray.
- Sauté or stir-fry vegetables with very little fat or use water, wine or broth.
- To thicken sauces and gravies without lumping, eliminate fat and instead mix cornstarch or flour with a small amount of cold liquid. Stir this mixture slowly into the hot liquid you want to thicken and bring it back to a boil.
- Chill soups, gravies and stews and skim off hardened fat before reheating to serve.
- Select lean cuts of meat and trim off visible fat.
- Remove skin from poultry.
- Bake, broil, grill, poach or microwave meat, poultry or fish instead of frying in fat.
- Decrease the proportion of oil in homemade salad dressings. Try one-third oil to two-thirds vinegar.
- Use reduced-calorie sour cream or mayonnaise, or to reduce fat further, use plain low-fat or non-fat yogurt, buttermilk or blended cottage cheese.

instead of regular sour cream or mayonnaise for sauces, dips and salad dressings. If a sauce made with yogurt is to be heated, add 1 tablespoon of cornstarch to 1 cup of yogurt to prevent separation.

- Use skim or low-fat milk instead of whole milk. For extra richness, try evaporated skim milk.

To Decrease Saturated Fat and Cholesterol

- Use two egg whites or an egg substitute product instead of one whole egg. In some recipes, you can simply decrease the total number of eggs.
- Use margarine instead of butter. Look for margarines in which liquid vegetable oil is the first ingredient.
- Use vegetable oils instead of solid fats. To substitute liquid oil for solid fats, use about one-fourth less than the recipe calls for. For example, if a recipe calls for 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) of solid fat, use 3 tablespoons of oil. For cakes or pie crusts use a recipe that specifically calls for oil because liquid fats require special mixing procedures and different proportions of sugar.

To Decrease Sugar

- Try reducing sugar by one-quarter to one-third in baked goods and desserts. This works best with quick breads, cookies, pie fillings, custard, puddings and fruit crisps. It may be less desirable for some cakes. Do not decrease the small amount of sugar in plain yeast breads because it provides food for the yeast and promotes rising.
- Decrease or eliminate sugar when canning or freezing fruits or buy unsweetened frozen fruit or fruit canned in its own juice or water.
- Increase the amount of cinnamon or vanilla in a recipe to enhance the impression of sweetness.
- Nonsugar sweeteners can be used in moderation, but their use is not necessary to decrease sugar in the diet. Aspartame (Equal) will not work in products that are cooked or baked. Saccharin can be used in hot and cold foods but may leave a bitter aftertaste. Neither product can provide the volume or structure that sugar does, so rather than substituting, it's best to choose recipes especially tested for use with non-sugar sweeteners.

To Decrease Sodium

- Salt may be omitted or reduced in most recipes. Do not reduce the salt in cured meats or pickled

or brined vegetables because it acts as a preservative. It is best not to omit the salt in yeast breads because it helps control the rising action of yeast.

- Start with a gradual reduction. For example, if a recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of salt, try 1/2 teaspoon. If you reduce the amount of salt gradually, you'll soon adjust to the less salty flavor. Choose fresh or low-sodium versions of products. For example, choose low-sodium soups and broths, soy sauce, canned vegetables and tomato products.
- Rely on herbs and spices rather than salt for flavor.
- Use garlic or onion powder instead of garlic or onion salt.
- Try fruit juice or wine for cooking liquid instead of broth or bouillon.

Milligrams of sodium in 1 teaspoon

Salt	2,130
Garlic salt	1,850
Onion salt	1,620
Baking soda	820
Monosodium glutamate (MSG)	490
Soy sauce	345
Baking powder	330
Garlic powder	1
Onion powder	1

To Increase Fiber

- Choose whole grain instead of highly refined products; for example, whole wheat flour and bread, bulgur, brown rice, oatmeal, whole cornmeal and barley.
- Whole wheat flour can usually be substituted for up to one-half of all-purpose refined flour. For example, if a recipe calls for 2 cups of all-purpose flour, try 1 cup of all-purpose and 1 cup of whole wheat flour. When completely substituting whole wheat for white flour, use 7/8 cup whole wheat flour for 1 cup of white flour.
- Add extra fruits and vegetables to recipes and include the peel when appropriate.
- Add fruits to muffins, pancakes, salads and desserts, and add vegetables to quiche fillings, casseroles and salads.

Putting It Into Practice

Now that you have some guidelines, how do you begin? First, look at the ingredients in your recipe and review their functions. Then look at the general guidelines for modifying ingredients. Adjust quantities of major ingredients gradually. Individual tastes

vary, and it may take some time to find out what level is satisfactory to you.

When you find modifications that work, make a note of them. Recipes for better health are worth repeating!

Here are two recipes to get you started:

Meatballs

Using less total meat provides an adequate 3-ounce cooked serving (instead of 5 ounces).

Yield: 6 servings

Original

2 pounds 85% lean ground beef
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 eggs
1/4 cup milk
1/2 cup rolled oats
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
Salt and pepper to taste
Butter for frying

Revised

1 1/2 pounds extra lean ground beef
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 egg whites
1/4 cup skim milk
1/2 cup rolled oats
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
omit or use less
1 teaspoon cooking oil

In large bowl mix all ingredients except oil. Shape into 12 meatballs. Place on broiler pan or shallow baking pan that has been sprayed with nonstick spray coating. Bake at 325°F until browned; or cook in skillet. Serve with rice, pasta or potatoes.

Approximate nutritional values per serving:

352 calories	210 calories
21 grams fat	8 grams fat
54% calories from fat	35% calories from fat
172 mg cholesterol	66 mg cholesterol

Pumpkin Bread

Yield: 16 slices

Original

3/4 cup pumpkin
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 egg white
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup chopped nuts

Moderate Fat

1 cup pumpkin
1/2 cup sugar
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 egg white
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup raisins

Low Fat

1 cup pumpkin
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 cup plain low-fat yogurt
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup raisins

In large mixer bowl beat together pumpkin, sugar, oil and egg or yogurt. In a medium bowl combine the flours, baking powder, soda, cinnamon and salt; add to pumpkin mixture, stirring just until moistened. Stir in the nuts or raisins. Pour into a greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pan. Bake in preheated 350°F oven for about 1 hour or until a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes, then remove from pan and cool completely.

Approximate nutritional value per slice:

155 calories	127 calories	105 calories
9 grams fat	5 grams fat	2 grams fat
53% calories from fat	32% calories from fat	17% calories from fat
0 mg cholesterol	0 mg cholesterol	0 mg cholesterol

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