

Simple Ways to Change a Recipe



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

There are many ways to change your favorite recipes to make them lower in cholesterol, fat, sugar and calories. You can change the way you prepare foods by choosing lower calorie and lower fat methods of cooking. You can also change the food item in the recipe to one that is lower in fat and/or calories. For example, you can save 180 calories by baking your meat instead of frying it. You can replace 1 cup sour cream in a recipe with 1 cup plain, low fat yogurt to save about 275 calories.

Cooking methods

- **Baking:** Cover the container in the oven. This method works best with leaner meat. Add a fat free liquid like water or broth to help keep it moist.
- **Poaching:** Cook in a small amount of simmering water or broth. Fish, chicken and eggs poach well. Be careful not to leave foods in simmering liquids too long. Overcooking will leave these foods dry.
- **Steaming:** Arrange foods in a steamer. Add a small amount of water. Steaming helps keep vitamins and minerals in the food. Vegetables and fish are good choices for steaming. You can also steam foods in the microwave in a covered dish.
- **Sautéing / Stir Frying:** Cook meats and vegetables in small amount of oil or margarine. Avoid butter, shortening or grease. Start with 1 teaspoon of oil or margarine. Only add more if the food begins to stick. Use non-stick cookware or a non-stick wok with non-stick spray such as Pam. Cook for a short time at high heat.
- **Grilling / Broiling:** Meats, poultry, fish and vegetables can be grilled or broiled. Coat broiler or grill with vegetable cooking spray to prevent sticking. Remove as much fat as possible before cooking. For poultry with skin, keeping the skin on can help the meat retain moisture. Remove the skin before eating to reduce the fat.
- **Roasting:** Meats should be roasted in a preheated oven at 350 degrees to keep meat moist. Baste with wine, fruit juice, stock or chicken or beef broth.
- **Miscellaneous:**
 - Chill soups, stews, sauces and broths after cooking. Lift off hardened fat. This saves 100 calories per tablespoon of fat removed!
 - Substitute leaner cuts of meat and trim fat from meat before cooking. Substitute lean ground turkey or ground round for regular ground meats such as hamburger. Remove skin from poultry before eating.
 - Use low calorie choices for sauces, dressing and seasoning. Use vinegar, mustard, tomato juice, lemon juice, herbs, spices, fat-free bouillon instead of creams, fats, oil and mayonnaise.

- ▶ Add healthy, nutrient-rich foods to a recipe can to lower the fat and calories. Try adding beans, fruit, or vegetables to a higher fat, higher calorie food item. For example, add chopped celery, onions and apples to chicken salad to lower the calories and increase the vitamins and minerals.

Food substitutes to reduce calories and fat

Use this guide to help you make lower calorie choices. The higher calorie food item is listed along with lower calorie substitutes.

Meat and protein:

Replace **1 whole egg** with:

- ¼ cup egg substitute,
- 1 egg white plus 2 teaspoons oil, or
- 2 egg whites

Replace **1 ounce cheese** with:

- 1 ounce low calorie or skim milk cheese such as farmer's, mozzarella, feta, reduced calorie cheeses, or any cheese with less than 5 grams of fat per ounce, or
- 2 tablespoons parmesan or Romano cheese

Replace **whole milk ricotta cheese** with:

- 1 cup low fat cottage cheese, or
- 1 cup low fat ricotta cheese

Make **quiche** with:

- Egg substitute and low fat cottage cheese instead of whole eggs and hard cheese

Replace **high fat meat** such as sausage, bacon, ground pork, poultry with skin, luncheon meats with 8 or more grams of fat per serving, ground beef and spare ribs with:

- Leaner cuts and low fat meat such as lean ground beef, ground round, lean pork, ground chuck, luncheon meats with 4 or less grams of fat per serving, poultry without the skin, tenderloin cuts of meat, ground turkey with 4 or less grams of fat per ounce , or
- Tofu cubes, cooked dried beans or cooked grains and starches in recipes

Make **lasagna** with:

- Ground turkey and low fat cottage cheese for all or part of the regular ground beef and ricotta cheese

Dairy products:

Replace **plain whole milk yogurt** with:

- 1 cup low fat or non-fat yogurt

Replace **1 cup whole milk** with:

- 1 cup fat free or skim milk

Replace **1 cup sour cream** with:

- 1 cup low fat cottage cheese with 1 tablespoon lemon juice blended in food processor or blender,
- 1 cup low fat or non-fat yogurt, or
- 1 cup low fat or reduced fat sour cream

Replace **1 cup shortening** with:

- 1 cup margarine,
- 1 cup light or low calorie margarine, or
- ¾ cup vegetable oil

Replace **1 cup butter** with:

- 7/8 cup of vegetable oil,
- 1 cup tub margarine, reduced calorie,
- Use butter flavored powders to flavor foods instead of butter or margarine, or
- 2 sticks margarine, reduced calorie, decrease by 1 to 2 teaspoons

Replace **1 cup light cream** with:

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil plus fat-free (skim) milk to equal 1 cup

Replace **1 cup buttermilk** with:

- 1 cup fat-free (skim) milk plus 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice – beat briskly and let stand 5 minutes,
- 1 cup low fat buttermilk, or
- 1 cup 1% buttermilk or evaporated milk

Replace **1 cup cream cheese** with:

- 1 cup light cream cheese,
- 1 cup Neufchatel cheese – sold in grocery stores by cream cheese, or
- ¼ cup margarine blended with 1 cup low fat cottage cheese – add a small amount of fat-free (skim) milk to blend and salt to taste (optional)

Replace **1 cup heavy cream** with:

- 2/3 cup fat-free (skim) milk and 1/3 cup vegetable oil,
- 1 cup evaporated skim milk, or
- 1 cup 1% buttermilk

Make fat-free white sauce:

- Combine 1 cup fat-free milk, 1½ tablespoons flour, ½ teaspoon salt and a pinch of white pepper in a non-stick saucepan. Beat with wire whisk until smooth. Cook, stirring, over low to moderate heat until thickened. Simmer 1 minute. Makes 1 cup. 132 calories. (B. Gibbons, *The Slim Gourmet*)

Soups:

Replace **chicken or beef broth/bouillon** with:

- Homemade defatted broth. Prepare broth then chill to harden fat on surface. Remove fat. For easy storage, freeze in ice cube trays then store cubes in freezer bags.

Replace **cream of celery soup** with:

- 1 cup fat-free (skim) milk white sauce plus 1¼ cups chopped celery

Replace **cream of chicken soup** with:

- ¼ cups fat-free (skim) milk white sauce plus chicken bouillon granules to taste

Replace **cream of mushroom soup** with:

- 1 cup fat-free (skim) milk white sauce plus 1 can mushrooms, drained, or 1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced

Other:

Replace **2 tablespoons flour (as thickener)** with:

- Try 1 tablespoon cornstarch or 2 teaspoons arrowroot

Make **pancakes** with:

- Egg substitute instead of whole eggs and coat pan with vegetable cooking spray

Replace **1 ounce baking chocolate** with:

- 3 tablespoons cocoa powder plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Desserts:

Sweeteners:

- Reduce amount of sugar or honey by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of original amount in recipe. Do not use more than $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar, honey or molasses for each cup of flour in baked goods. Cut back on sour or bitter flavors such as vinegar, lemon or lime. Increase flavors such as vanilla or cinnamon to give the impression of sweetness.
- For uncooked dishes, use 12 packets Equal or 8 packets Sweet 'N Low for each $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar. For cooked dishes, Splenda or Stevia keep their flavor better.

Gelatin salads / desserts:

- Cut up fresh fruit and add a small amount (1 to 2 tablespoons) of whipped cream or 1 tablespoon of honey for a treat.
- Use unsweetened or sugar-free gelatin.
- Use unsweetened fruit juice or fruits packed in light syrup or fruit juice.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

The Library for Health Information is available to help you find more health information at (614) 293-3707 or e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.