

### How can I “healthify” my own recipes?

The Eat Better America Kitchens test recipes every day. Many recipes get tested more than once for the best results. We're passing on our secrets so that you can lighten up your family favorites. With so many variables, it's OK if it takes you more than one try, too. Head for the kitchen, and try a few of these ideas soon. Making food healthier is all about eating better!

#### Focus on Fat

Start by cutting the fat in half; work down from there. Fats are calorie heavy with 9 calories per gram, while carbohydrates and protein have just 4 calories per gram.

- Read labels to find low-fat and fat-free options for favorites like milk, cheese, yogurt, sour cream, half-and-half, ice cream and whipped topping. To adjust more easily, make a gradual switch from reduced-fat to low-fat and then on to fat-free ingredients.
- Use part-skim cheeses instead of their higher fat counterparts, or use lesser amounts of sharper-flavored cheeses like Parmesan, feta or gorgonzola.
- Canola, soybean and olive oils are good fats to use for stir-frying, cooking and some baking because they have less saturated fat than many other options.
- Egg substitutes can replace eggs at a savings of 5 grams of fat each (1/4 cup = 1 large egg).

#### Cooking

- Choose lean and extra-lean ground meats or ground turkey breast.
- Choose loin and sirloin meats and skinless white-meat poultry.
- Trim fat from meats before cooking.
- Cut bacon or sausage amounts in half, or switch to turkey bacon, low-fat sausages or vegetarian alternatives.
- Cut meat amounts in chilis and casseroles in half; add beans for extra protein and fiber.
- Blend or process 1/4 to 1/3 of a soup to make it creamy instead of adding cream or thickeners.

#### Baking

- Replace butter with no-trans-fat vegetable oil spread. Or, replace half with canola oil.
- Replace half the fat with applesauce. Next time, go further if you like the results.
- Cut chocolate chips in half and use miniatures to make the flavor go further.
- Toast nuts for fullest flavor, then use half the amount and finely chop.
- Use cooking spray to grease pans; spray cupcake liners to release muffins easily.

### **Punch up the Flavor**

Fat carries flavor. When fat is reduced or removed, foods can become bland. It's important to increase flavorings and/or seasonings to compensate for that lost fat.

- Use grated or shredded lemon, lime or orange peel, or squeeze fresh juice to heighten flavor.
  - Add high-flavored ingredients like Dijon mustard, balsamic vinegar, garlic, gingerroot, chili peppers, capers, sun-dried tomatoes, olives, hoisin sauce or other full-flavored condiments.
  - Sprinkle or stir in chopped fresh herbs just before serving to brighten flavors.
  - Double or triple the amount of vanilla, and increase spices such as cinnamon and nutmeg when baking.
- 

### **Check the Sodium**

- Buy low- or reduced-sodium instead of regular chicken broth, soy sauce, canned foods and prepared pasta sauces.
  - Rinse canned veggies and beans before using.
  - Cut added salt in half or leave it out completely.
  - Instead of salt, use a squeeze of fresh lemon or lime juice or a splash of high-flavored vinegar.
- 

### **Add Fiber**

- Double the amount of veggies and/or legumes in stir-fries, casseroles, soups, stews and salads to help fill you up.
- Switch to whole grain pasta, rice and grains.
- Mix oatmeal or other cereal into burgers and meatballs.
- Crush high-fiber cereal such as Fiber One® to coat chicken breasts and fish fillets or use as a topping for baked dishes like casseroles or muffins.
- Replace half the amount of all-purpose flour with whole wheat flour when baking.