

Heart Healthy Cooking - Modifying Your Favorite Recipes

As you decide how to make a recipe more healthy, start by asking yourself these questions:

- 1) *Which ingredients contribute more saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, sugar or calories than I should have?*

These ingredients might include fatty meats, cheese, cream, whole milk, egg yolks, butter, lard, vegetable shortening, salt, soy sauce, cream soups, sugars or honey, etc.

- 2) *Are all of these ingredients necessary? Can I leave them out of the recipe?*

Sometimes the cheese used for “decoration” can be omitted, egg whites can be used instead of whole eggs, and oil can be used instead of butter or shortening without making big changes in the taste and texture of the recipe.

- 3) *If the ingredient is necessary, how can it be modified to meet my nutrition goals?*

You may be able to reduce the amount of the ingredient. For example, the amount of meat in many main dishes can be reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$, and fat and sugar in baked goods can often be reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$. You may also be able to substitute a healthier version of the ingredient. See the list below for some suggestions.

Instead of:	Try:
Fatty Meats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leaner version of the meat (ground round instead of regular hamburger) • Less meat than the recipe calls for • Browning the meat and draining the fat before adding to the recipe • Eliminating the meat and adding beans or soy protein products as a protein replacement
Butter as a spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft tub margarine on bread and rolls • Low-fat tub margarines - good substitutes for butter on bread or vegetables, but don't work as well for baking • Applesauce or other fruit toppings on waffles and pancakes • Spreads made by blending low-fat Ricotta cheese with jam or other flavorings
Butter, Lard or Shortening in cooking and baking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil in cakes, banana bread, muffins – Use $\frac{3}{4}$ Tbsp oil to replace each Tbsp of butter, stick margarine, or shortening • Applesauce to replace 50% of the fat in many recipes for cakes or fruit breads. • Vegetable oil sprays or small amounts of oil in skillet and pans • Add broth or water to reduce the amount of fat needed for sautéing

Half and half	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaporated skim milk – in baked goods, puddings, pumpkin pie • Fat free coffee cream substitutes - in non-baked desserts
Sour cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat free or low fat sour cream • Greek yogurt • Yogurt cheese – drain plain yogurt in a fine sieve or cheese cloth lined strainer for several hours (keep refrigerated). Has consistency and flavor of sour cream or cream cheese. • Blend one cup fat free cottage cheese with 1 Tbsp. lemon juice. This will work for dips or dressings, but not baking or cooking.
Regular Cheese – made from whole milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small amounts of part-skim, low-fat cheese • Fat-free cheese, if it provides the texture that you want • Smaller amounts of highly flavored cheese (Parmesan, Bleu, Romano, feta)
Cream cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat free cream cheese – does not work well in recipes • Low fat cream cheese – sometimes labeled Neufchâtel – has $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ less fat than regular • Yogurt cheese (see above) as a spread
Creamy dips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use low-fat or fat-free plain yogurt combined with low-fat mayonnaise. • Avocado – low in saturated fat, although higher in calories
Cream Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low fat canned cream soups – Healthy Request, Healthy Choice, etc • Puree potatoes or part of the vegetables in the soup to get a creamy texture
Whole eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two egg whites = one whole egg for baking • Commercial egg substitutes made from egg whites
Gravy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-fat gravy – Chill meat broth in refrigerator, remove fat after it hardens. Or, use fat-skimming cup to remove fat from hot or warm meat broth. Thicken fat-free broth with cornstarch or flour. • Low-fat or fat-free canned or packaged gravy – although these are usually high in salt.
Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat in nuts does not raise cholesterol levels, but does contain calories, so be careful with amounts. • Fewer nuts in recipes will reduce calories • Toast nuts to intensify flavor so you can use less
Ice Cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorbet, fruit ices, sherbet, low-fat or fat-free ice cream or frozen yogurt are lower in fat, but still contain sugar and calories.

Mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular mayonnaise does not contain much saturated fat, but has 100 calories per tablespoon. • Use low-fat or fat-free mayonnaise • Use half low-fat mayonnaise and half plain yogurt to make a creamy dressing for potato or macaroni salad • Use a vinaigrette dressing for salads instead of mayonnaise (vinegar, lime juice or lemon juice with oil and seasonings)
Marinades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use smaller amounts of oil in marinades
Pie crust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat more fruit desserts in the form of crisps, cobblers • Bake pumpkin pie without a crust • No substitute will give the same texture as lard, butter, or shortening in pie crust • Crust can be made with oil to reduce saturated fat, but calories will still be high and texture will be different • Graham cracker crust contains about the same amount of fat as other crusts
Flour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute equal amounts of a whole grain flour for $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the white flour in a recipe to increase fiber intake • Make oat flour by grinding dry oatmeal in the blender until it has a crumbly, flour-like texture. Replace $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the white flour in muffins, bread, pancakes, biscuits.
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add vegetables to casseroles, even if the recipe doesn't call for them • Add finely chopped vegetables to sauces for more nutrition and flavor • Include ground or finely chopped carrots in spaghetti sauce or sloppy Joe sandwiches
Seasonings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt can be eliminated completely from all recipes except yeast breads without affecting texture. • Start by reducing the salt in foods by one-half, gradually reduce further as your taste allows. • Use additional flavorings so you don't miss the salt – herbs, onion, garlic, ginger, hot peppers, lemon and lime.

When altering your recipes, start slow, making small alterations until you achieve a balance between optimal nutrition and good taste. Don't be too drastic - recipes don't have to be fat or sugar free to fit in your diet plan. If you are making changes in a recipe, it works best to make only one change at a time. That way, if the recipe doesn't turn out the way you expected, you will be able to identify why and try something different the next time.

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