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Now You're Cookin'!

Recipe Makeovers!

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As times change, we may look for ways to make updates and keep up with what is new. Several current TV shows are dedicated to making over your wardrobe or even your home. Why not update and revitalize your food, too? Learn to prepare your old family favorites in new, healthier ways with these recipe makeovers.

When should you modify a recipe?

Not all recipes need a makeover. If you can answer yes to the following questions, the recipe might be right for a makeover.

Yes No **1. Is the recipe high in fat, cholesterol, sugar or salt?**

A good place to determine if the recipe needs modification is to look at the nutritional information, if it is available. Be sure to check the serving size. If a recipe serves 12 and contains two eggs, the amount of cholesterol per serving from those eggs is going to be relatively low.

Yes No **2. Do you prepare the food often?**

If you only make a dish for special occasions, instead of weekly, you may not need to modify the recipe. For example, if you make your great-grandma's pie recipe once a year for Thanksgiving, you probably want to enjoy the recipe "as is."

Yes No **3. Do you eat a large portion of the food?**

Try cutting the portions smaller. Are you making a 9- by 13-inch pan of brownies for just two people? Cutting it down to a 9- by 9-inch pan might be the key. Many people would rather eat less of a regular recipe than modify the ingredients in the recipe.

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How to Modify a Recipe

Try these suggestions the next time you want to make over a recipe. Just remember, recipe modification is a trial-and-error process. If you don't like the way something turns out the first time, try readjusting it the next time until you find a version you like.

To Decrease Total Fat and Calories:

- Try reducing fat by one-fourth or one-third in baked products. This works best in quick breads, muffins and cookies but might not work as well for cakes.
- Use fruit purees (plum, prune or applesauce) for part or all of the fat in baked products. You may want to use a substitute for only half of the fat and see if you like the texture. Try substituting more fruit puree the next time you prepare the recipe.
- Cut back on added fat. Instead of cooking with added butter or margarine, use a nonstick pan, cooking spray or healthy oils (olive or canola oil) instead. Sauté or stir-fry vegetables with little fat or use water, wine or broth.
- Skim excess fat from the top of soups, gravies and stews. You may need to let it cool to make removing the hardened fat easier.
- Choose healthier cooking methods that use less fat, such as baking, broiling, grilling, poaching, steaming or microwaving.
- Use reduced-fat sour cream or mayonnaise in place of regular sour cream or mayonnaise. Try using plain low-fat or nonfat yogurt or blended cottage cheese in place of mayonnaise in a dip. If a sauce made with yogurt needs 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.
- Choose lean meats, and drain excess fat after cooking it.

To Decrease Saturated Fat and Cholesterol:

- Use two egg whites or an egg substitute product instead of one whole egg.
- Use margarine instead of butter. Look for margarines in which liquid vegetable oil is the first ingredient. Remember to check the label for trans fat (hydrogenated vegetable oil). Using reduced-fat margarine might not work in baked goods, such as cookies.
- Use vegetable oils instead of solid fats. To substitute liquid oil for solid fats, use about one-quarter less than the recipe calls for. For cakes and pie crusts, use a recipe that 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. Do not decrease the amount of sugar in yeast breads because it provides food for the yeast and promotes rising.
- Increase the amount of cinnamon or vanilla in a recipe to enhance the impression of sweetness.
- Consider using artificial sweeteners, such as Splenda. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for amounts to substitute. Some do not work as well in baked goods, while others may leave a bitter aftertaste. They may change the volume or structure. For best results, use recipes especially tested for use with artificial sweeteners.

To Decrease Sodium:

- Start with a gradual reduction. If you reduce the amount gradually, you'll slowly adjust to the less salty flavor.
- Drain liquid from canned vegetables and rinse with water.
- Salt may be omitted or reduced in many recipes. For example, omit added salt when boiling potatoes or pasta. However, do not omit the salt in yeast breads because it helps control the rising action of yeast.
- Choose fresh or low-sodium versions of products. For example, choose low-sodium soups, 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, water or wine as a cooking liquid instead of broth or bouillon.

Recipes

To Increase Fiber:

- Choose whole-grain products more often. For example, use whole-wheat flour and bread, bulgur, whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, whole cornmeal and barley.
- Substitute whole-wheat flour for half of the all-purpose flour in a recipe. For example, if the recipe calls for 2 cups of flour, make 1 cup whole wheat. When completely substituting whole-wheat flour for white flour, use 7/8 cup whole-wheat flour for every 1 cup of white flour.
- Add vegetables to recipes (for example, chili, meatloaf, hamburgers and spaghetti sauce) and include the peel when appropriate. Add grated carrots or zucchini, or mashed squash or sweet potatoes, in muffins and quick breads. Add extra vegetables to quiche fillings, casseroles and salads.
- Add oatmeal to meatloaf or meatballs.
- Add beans (such as kidney, pinto or navy beans) to soup, chili or stew.
- Add fruits to muffins, pancakes, salads and desserts.

Reduced-fat Morning Glory Muffins

1 c. all-purpose flour
1 c. whole-wheat flour
¾ c. sugar
2 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. salt
¾ c. egg substitute*
½ c. vegetable oil
½ c. unsweetened applesauce
2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 c. chopped apples (unpeeled)
½ c. raisins
¾ c. grated carrots
2 Tbsp. chopped pecans (optional)

Key to Abbreviations
tsp. = teaspoon
Tbsp. = tablespoon
c. = cup
g = grams
mg = milligrams

Preheat oven to 350 F. Sift or whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Add the apples, raisins, carrots and nuts and stir to combine.

In a separate bowl, whisk the egg substitute with the oil, applesauce and vanilla. Pour into the bowl with the dry ingredients and blend well. Spoon the batter into muffin tins lined with muffin cups (or sprayed with cooking spray). Fill each to the brim. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean. Cool muffins in the pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a rack to continue cooling.

*¾ cup egg substitute = 3 whole eggs

Makes 18 muffins. Each serving (one muffin) has 170 calories, 7 g fat, 25 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 3 g protein and 200 mg sodium.

This recipe was modified:

- Replacing half the all-purpose flour with whole-wheat flour
- Cutting the sugar in half
- Enhancing the sweet flavor by doubling the cinnamon and vanilla
- Reducing sodium by cutting salt in half
- Replacing each egg with ¼ c. egg substitute
- Reducing the fat by replacing half the oil with unsweetened applesauce
- Peels were left on the apples to increase fiber
- Coconut was replaced with an additional ¼ c. grated carrots

Reduced-fat Broccoli Bacon Salad

1 large bunch fresh broccoli, stems and tops, chopped
⅓ c. fresh celery, diced
⅓ c. scallions, tops and bulbs, chopped
40 red seedless grapes, halved
½ c. golden seedless raisins, cooked in hot water to soften (optional)
4 slices bacon, cooked, chopped
⅓ c. unsalted pecans, chopped

Dressing:

2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
4 Tbsp. cider vinegar
5 Tbsp. mayonnaise
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper

Parboil the broccoli in a large pot of boiling water for three minutes. Remove broccoli from stove, drain and run broccoli under cold water for 1 minute (make sure the broccoli is still crunchy). In a large bowl, combine the first 5 salad ingredients and dressing. Chill for at least 2 hours. Fold bacon and pecans in right before serving.

Makes six to eight servings. Each serving has 270 calories, 16 g fat, 28 g carbohydrate and 260 mg sodium.

The original recipe, before modification, contained 390 calories, 21 g fat, 43 g carbohydrate and 580 mg sodium.

This recipe was modified:

- Parboiling the broccoli to reduce bitterness of raw broccoli, especially since sugar was eliminated from the original recipe to reduce calories. Also, parboiling brings the green color out.
- Adding grapes. The original recipe did not call for grapes, which adds volume, color and flavor, and reduces calories.
- Reducing the amount of mayonnaise used by adding more vinegar and olive oil. This reduces total calories and fat, and also adds healthy monounsaturated fat in the form of olive oil.
- Using less bacon. The original recipe calls for eight bacon slices; the modified recipe calls for four slices. You also can use turkey bacon.
- Adding unsalted pecans to make the recipe more interesting. You also can use sunflower seeds, but stick to the unsalted ones in either case.

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Visit the NDSU Extension website at **www.ag.ndsu.edu/food**

Reference: Some material was adapted from "Revitalize Your Recipes for Better Health," a publication by Christina Stark, Cornell University Extension Service.

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