

## Recipe modification

---

Food should not only be nutritious; it should be enjoyable, tasty and easy to prepare. By experimenting in the kitchen you can modify your own favourite recipes to create healthier meals that are tasty.

### Try some of the following ideas to modify your recipes

#### Meat, chicken, fish and eggs

- > Use lean cuts of meat and avoid meat that is marbled with fat such as sausages and chops.
- > Take the skin off chicken.
- > Eat more fish. Try boiled, grilled or steamed fish or canned fish in brine or water.
- > Poach fish in water, wine, tomato juice, lemon juice and herbs.
- > Include lean processed meats e.g. ham, turkey breast, chicken breast.
- > Grill or roast meats on a rack, without adding fat. Add water in the bottom of the pan to stop meat drying out.
- > When browning meat brush the pan with oil instead of pouring it in or alternatively use a poly or monounsaturated cooking spray.
- > Barbecue meat on a grill so the fat drips away and trim visible fat off before cooking.
- > Reduce meat in bolognaise sauces by adding 50/50 kidney beans and lean topside mince.
- > Instead of fatty bacon in recipes, use lean ham, 97% fat free bacon or turkey bacon.
- > Cook meat-based casseroles and curries in advance, cool and skim fat off with a spoon.
- > When boiling meat or chicken for stock, let the stock cool and skim fat from the top before making soup.
- > Boil eggs or if poaching or scrambling, use a non-stick pan. Make scrambled eggs / omelettes with reduced fat milk.
- > For gravy allow juices from meat to cool, remove fat from the top and use what is left to make the gravy.
- > Bake schnitzels in the oven rather than frying - spray with oil spray.
- > Reduce meat serves to 120-150g cooked per person.

#### Dairy

- > Preferably use low fat dairy products, particularly when they are the major ingredient.
- > Use small amounts of cheese and select reduced fat cheeses (cottage, ricotta, reduced fat tasty cheddar, extra light cream cheese).
- > Use low-fat or 'diet' flavoured yoghurts or add fruit to low fat natural yoghurt.
- > Choose low fat or diet icecreams and limit.
- > Use a fat reduced coconut milk / cream and limit.
- > Make custards with low fat milk and sweeteners.

#### Pastry

- > Use filo pastry rather than high saturated fat pastries such as puff, shortcrust and choux
- > Brush layers of filo with low fat milk or egg wash and spray the outer layers with an oil spray

#### Fats and oils

- > Use low fat cooking methods where possible, these require no oil or only a small amount.
- > Steaming, blanching (in water), stir frying, pan frying with minimal oil / spray oil, grilling, roasting / baking on a rack are all healthy cooking methods.
- > Use non stick pans or baking paper.
- > Use only poly or monounsaturated margarines or oils but use them sparingly.



## Recipe modification

---

- > Minimise or avoid the use of saturated fats in recipes (lard, copha, butter, ghee, butter blends).
- > Instead of frying or sautéing in oil, use water, stock, wine or juice.
- > Use oil free salad dressings and low fat mayonnaise.
- > Instead of cream on desserts try yoghurt, Fruche or evaporated skim milk that is chilled and whipped.
- > Instead of sour cream try natural yoghurt or butter milk.
- > When baking cakes use poly or monounsaturated margarines and oils.
- > Limit the amount of margarine on bread. Use a thin scrape of extra light cream cheese or avocado.
- > For savoury creamy sauces, use low fat evaporated milk, butter milk, low fat natural yoghurt or skim milk thickened with corn flour.

### Breads and cereals

- > Use wholegrain varieties where possible.
- > Choose long grain rices e.g. Doongara Clever Rice, Basmati.
- > Choose tomato based sauces with pasta.
- > Try other grains like couscous, cracked wheat instead of rice as a change.

### Vegetables and fruit

- > Make healthier chips by parboiling them first then spraying with oil and baking in the oven.
- > Avoid white sauces and oil on prepared vegetables.
- > Add legumes to stews, casseroles, soups and bolognese sauces to increase the fibre and reduce the amount of meat.
- > When roasting vegetables avoid cooking them in the fat that has come off the meat, spray or brush with oil and roast in a pan.
- > Instead of adding sour cream to your potato use natural yoghurt or cottage cheese.
- > Leave the skin on fruit (where appropriate).
- > Aim to use fruit in recipes such as cakes and muffins, this can assist in reducing the added sugar content of the recipes.

### Sugar

- > Try replacing sugar in recipes with dried or fresh fruit.
- > Use unsweetened fruit juice in recipes instead of sugar.
- > Fruit can be stewed in diet lemonade or fruit juice (remember to keep refrigerated after stewing).
- > Artificial sweeteners can be used instead of sugar in cooking and in recipes. Splenda can be added during cooking where as other sweeteners can go bitter or loose their sweetness when heated.
- > Vegetables such as carrot, pumpkin and zucchini can be used in baking sweet and savoury muffins.
- > Small amounts of sugar can be added to recipes.
- > Look at the overall quantity of sugar in relation to how many serves there are.

### Salt

- > Look for products that are salt reduced.
- > Avoid adding salt in cooking and at the table.
- > Use herbs and spices for flavour both fresh and dried.
- > Use marinades for extra flavour e.g. lemon juice, wine, vinegar, tomato puree.
- > Sea salt, rock salt, chicken salt, MSG, etc should not be substituted for salt.



---

### For more information

The Diabetes Centre, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 8 Woodville Rd, Woodville South SA 5011  
Telephone: (08) 8222 6771

© Department of Health, Government of South Australia. All rights reserved  
Acknowledgements: RAH, Modbury Hospital, LMHS, Ambulatory & Primary Health Care Services