



Jennifer Dutton
Regional Extension Agent
News Release

Extension's Healthy Cooking School

The most popular New Year's resolution is to go on a diet and the most broken New Year's resolution is not sticking to a diet. This year, do not plan a diet; instead, make a plan to eat more healthfully. To follow a healthy eating plan, most of the foods need to be prepared at home. The first step is to take inventory of the foods in your home. Purge the kitchen of unhealthy foods such as: chips, cookies, candies, cola, etc. Next, replace those foods with healthier choices. Fresh veggie and fruit trays with fat-free or low-fat dressings and yogurts can replace the cookies and chips. Milk, water and real fruit juices can replace the colas. After the less healthy choices are gone, be careful not to make healthy foods unhealthy by poor preparation choices. Avoid excessive use of fats, sugar, and salt. Remember to boost fiber intake and always drink 6 to 8 glasses of water each day.

Foods served closest to the form that they are found in nature are the healthiest. For example, a fresh apple would be healthier than applesauce and applesauce would be healthier than apple juice. To keep foods healthy, cooking choices are also important. Steaming, broiling, grilling, baking, microwaving, and lightly stir-frying are good choices for reducing fat. Herbs, spices, vinegar, lemon juice, or salsa can add flavor to foods and reduce the need for salt to add flavor.

Eating a low fat diet does not mean sacrificing flavor and taste. You can enjoy many of the foods you love with just a few changes. In baking, use plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt or fat-free or low-fat sour cream. Another way to decrease the amount of fat and calories in your recipes is to use fat-free milk or 1% milk. For extra richness, try fat-free half-and-half or evaporated skim milk. Use vegetable oil spray instead of oil, shortening, or butter. You can prepare muffins and quick breads with less saturated fat and fewer calories by using three ripe, well mashed bananas instead of ½ cup butter or oil or substitute one cup applesauce per one cup of fat.

The St. Clair County Extension Office will be hosting an interactive "Healthy Cooking School" class taught by Jennifer Dutton, Regional Extension Agent in Human Nutrition, Diet, and Health on January 27th 2009 from 9:30 am until 11:30 am. You will learn how to prepare meals that are healthy, easy to prepare and taste good. Recipes will be demonstrated and participants will have the opportunity to taste each one. Participants will also learn up-to-date information on nutrition, meal planning, and exercise. Recipe booklets and handouts will be given to each participant. We hope to show you an approach to cooking using our heart healthy recipes to help you choose the correct foods and preparation methods to better your health.

For more information about the cooking school or other nutrition related information, please contact Jennifer at (205) 338-9416 or email jld0021@auburn.edu. To attend the cooking school, please pre-register by calling the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416 to request a registration form or download one from our website at www.aces.edu/StClair. You must pre-register no later than Tuesday, January 20th. Cost is \$5 per person. The class is limited to 18, due to space limitations.