

# Eating For Your Health

**M**any people think healthy eating means diet. And, for them, diet means a long list of no's: no fat, no sugar, no sodium, no cholesterol, no fun. However, you can become healthier by simply improving your eating habits. It's easy and can be fun! All you have to do is change – a little at a time.

This menu of eating ideas will help you eat food you like prepared in healthy ways. The tips show you how to reduce fat, sugar, sodium, and cholesterol, which is often better for you than eliminating them. They also show you how to retain and even increase the zest and flavor of your food.

Try some of these tips and have fun, healthy eating for a lifetime.

---

## Breakfast

When you have time, begin the day with fresh fruit rather than juice. For example, one orange has 65 calories; one cup of orange juice has 110 calories. The orange will take you longer to eat than orange juice does to drink – great news for food lovers.

Use a non-stick spray coating in a frying pan (or in an electric skillet) when preparing french toast, pancakes, or omelets.

Go ahead – have a two-egg omelet. Use one whole egg and only the white portion from the other egg. By omitting the second egg yolk, you will do away with about 300 milligrams of cholesterol and 65 calories. Don't forget to use a non-stick spray coating on your omelet pan.

Try vegetables such as tomatoes, broccoli, and mushrooms in your omelet rather than cheese. Tomatoes and broccoli are good sources of fiber and vitamins C and A. Mushrooms are a freebie – very low in calories.

It is time you tried low-fat milk, preferably skim milk. One cup of skim milk has 80 calories compared to 170 calories in whole milk. That is a saving of 90 fat calories per cup.

If you insist on eating bacon and sausage, broil or microwave the strips/links/patties and then pat dry. Remove as much of the visible bacon fat before eating as possible. You might consider eating some of the leaner pork foods.

Try pureed blueberries or strawberries on your pancakes and waffles instead of syrup and butter. This will eliminate lots of sugar and fat and will supply vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Treat your family to buckwheat pancakes for Sunday breakfast – another great way to get more fiber.

## Calcium Boosters

Give yourself a calcium boost. Mix 1 tablespoon of non-fat dry milk with a glass of skim milk. This adds only an extra 20 calories.

Sprinkle a tablespoon of non-fat dry milk on your hot or cold cereal. Then, add milk as you would normally.

Spice up your omelet with a tablespoon of non-fat dry milk. Again, this is only 20 calories.

Add some non-fat dry milk to pancake and french toast batters. A tablespoon or two will do.

## Lunch

For sandwiches, use whole wheat bread or pita bread rather than white bread – another great way to get your fiber. If you do not like whole wheat bread, make a sandwich using one slice of white bread and one slice of whole wheat bread.

Create a healthful low-calorie salad from your favorite salad bar. Heap it with broccoli, cauliflower, and shredded carrots. Go easy on the bacon bits, pepperoni, and eggs.

For a healthful salad dressing, use a scoop of cottage cheese. Each level tablespoon ( $\frac{1}{16}$  cup) of salad dressing has about 80 calories, all fat calories. You can have  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cottage cheese for the same number of calories and get protein and calcium, too.

Pass up the ketchup. Every tablespoon has 16 calories and lots of sugar and salt. Try a slice of fresh tomato for 4 calories and no salt.

Mix fresh fruit into low-fat yogurt rather than buying yogurt with added fruit. This saves about 60 calories a cup.

For a real bargain, try a whole wheat or pita bread sandwich with one slice of cheese heaped with lettuce and tomato (250 calories).

Make a low-cal salad – southern style. Slices of oranges and leaves of spinach are packed with iron and vitamin C. Perk up the taste of this eye-appealing salad with lemon juice, vinegar, or a low-cal dressing.

Switch to low-fat cheeses, such as part-skim mozzarella and low-fat cottage cheese. Compared to regular cheese, you save at least 40 fat calories per ounce.

A typical dieter's plate (hamburger pattie, cottage cheese, and fruit) is not a real bargain. Settle for a bowl of soup (not creamed) and a tossed salad with a vinegar/lemon dressing.

Always use water-packed tuna rather than oil-packed. This saves 80 calories for every half cup of tuna.

## Drinks

### *Mocktails*

Order a Bloody Mary without the vodka and salt on the glass rim. This saves over 100 calories.

For a cocktail with zero alcohol and virtually zero calories, sip a glass of mineral water seasoned with lemon or lime juice or add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup orange juice for only 25 calories.

For only 40 calories, mix 6 ounces of vegetable juice and 2 ounces of sparkling mineral water. Serve over ice and garnish with a lemon wedge.

Try a mocktail with 3 ounces of vegetable juice and 3 ounces of pineapple juice – only 35 calories.

Squeeze a little lime into  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of orange juice. Add enough cold water to make one cup. This is a very low-cal (55 calories), vitamin C-packed, refreshing drink.

### *Cocktails*

If you drink beer, try a bloody beer – 4 ounces of tomato juice and 4 ounces of beer. Compared to a regular 12-ounce beer, you save 90 calories.

Rule of thumb – use lots of ice in a tall glass for your cocktail. This leaves room for less liquid.

Remember, the lower the proof, the fewer the calories. By drinking 80 proof rather than 100 proof vodka, you save 25 calories for every  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces.

---

## Main Meals

To keep chicken moist, cook with the skin on, but take the skin off before eating. This saves at least 50 calories a piece. Plus, you avoid saturated fat and cholesterol.

No need to add salt or butter/margarine to processed grain products (noodles, rice, pasta) while cooking. Most will cook fine without them – just stir noodles occasionally. By not adding fat, you usually save about 50 calories a serving.

Spray your pans with non-stick coating before baking. There's no need to add extra fat.

Learn to enjoy your vegetables without added fat. All fats have at least 100 calories a tablespoon (equal to one pat of butter). Spice up your vegetables with lemon juice, herbs, and spices.

Spray rolls with a non-stick coating rather than brushing them with butter. This helps them brown, and you easily save 50 calories a roll.

Try this clever trick – cook meats in an electric fry pan but tilt the pan up on one end. This allows the fat to drain off while cooking the meat. Every tablespoon of fat saves you at least 100 calories.

Drain all meats after cooking to remove excess fats. Pat dry with a paper towel.

Use low-fat yogurt in place of sour cream in sauces. The new “sauce” will have a slightly different taste, less cholesterol, and 75 fewer fat calories per ¼ cup.

For something better than sour cream, blend together 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and 2 tablespoons skim milk. This “sour cream” has half the calories of regular sour cream.

Chill soups, stews, sauces, and broths and remove the congealed fat on the top – save at least 100 calories per tablespoon of fat removed.

Or, try this method to remove fat. Drop an ice cube into the mixture. Remove the cube after the fat has hardened around it.

Replace ricotta cheese or sour cream with cottage cheese in casseroles. Per ¼ cup, you save 50 calories.

Try evaporated skim milk in recipes that call for heavy cream, especially in sauces and casseroles. Evaporated milk can also be whipped like cream, provided the beaters, bowl, and milk are chilled thoroughly.

Eliminate ingredients listed as optional. For example, ¼ cup of black olives has 45 calories, all fat calories.

Cook meats and poultry using fat-free methods – broiling, roasting, baking, and steaming – and cook on a rack. The rack allows the fat to drain from meat.

Tomato juice is a flavorful, fat-free liquid for pot roast.

“Saute” onions and other foods in broth instead of oil.

No need to fry fish; try poaching fillets. Serve with lemon and a sprinkling of parsley.

Try wok cookery. You only need 1 tablespoon of oil to stir-fry meats and vegetables for the entire meal.

Turkey isn't just for Thanksgiving. It is virtually fat-free when the skin is removed.

Melt yogurt or cottage cheese or sprinkle parmesan cheese into a baked potato rather than butter or margarine. You save fat calories and get protein and calcium, too.

---

## Desserts

Get into the habit of eating fresh fruit to top off your meal.

When fruit won't satisfy your sweet tooth, choose fruit ice rather than ice cream or ice milk.

Cut the sugar in half and use skim milk when making custards and puddings.

Core an apple or pear, sprinkle with cinnamon and nutmeg and bake until done. These are delicious healthful desserts with about 65 calories per serving.

If you must have cake, choose one with fewer calories and no icing; try sponge and angel food cake.

---

## Between Meals

Try a frozen banana. Slice a very ripe banana, wrap in foil, and keep in your freezer. This is a healthy snack for only 100 calories.

Or, try a baked banana for only 100 calories. Wrap a very ripe banana in foil and bake in oven.

A cup of air-popped popcorn (no butter) has only 25 calories. Measure out the popped corn. Perk up the popcorn with herbs.

Fill the inside of celery sticks with peanut butter. This is a yummy snack. But, don't overdo the peanut butter; every level tablespoon is about 100 calories.

Make a Milk Julius. Mix 4 ounces of skim milk with 2 tablespoons of orange juice, only 40 calories.

Another satisfying treat is a dozen frozen grapes for only 40 calories.

Try something different. Mix ½ cup of buttermilk with ½ cup of tomato juice, about 70 calories.

Spread a little cheese spread on celery sticks. This snack gives you a calcium boost and fiber, too.

Select saltines, graham crackers, vanilla wafers, or tea biscuits. These are lower in calories than other crackers.

Snack on easy-to-grab, low-calorie foods: raw vegetables, oyster crackers, or fresh fruits.

## Chocoholics

Instead of a candy bar, treat yourself to chocolate-covered raisins, about 4 calories each.

Another way to satisfy your chocolate "fix" is to try a low-calorie hot chocolate drink mix, less than 50 calories.

You might also try one of the new chocolate fudge diet drinks to curb your craving.

Make your own chocolate-flavored mocha. Add an even tablespoon of unsweetened powdered chocolate to coffee grounds in coffee pot. Brew coffee as usual. Swiss mocha is the same except you add ¼ teaspoon of cinnamon.

---

## Eating Out

Order the child-sized portion of meat instead of the regular size. You will probably have to pay the regular price, but you cut the calories and cholesterol in half.

Always order salad dressings, gravies, and sauces on the side. Use these foods sparingly.

When available, substitute wheat products for white products. This adds fiber to your diet.

Request that sandwiches and hamburgers be prepared without mayonnaise. Order mayonnaise on the side and add a small amount. Every tablespoon of mayonnaise has 100 calories.

Order orange juice instead of a soft drink and get some vitamin C.

Request crackers or breadsticks rather than a dinner roll. But, order a roll instead of a biscuit.



HE-595

---

**Barbara Struempfer**, *Extension Nutritionist*, Professor, Nutrition and Food Science, Auburn University

---

**For more information**, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

---

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

6M, Revised June 2006, HE-595

© 2006 by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. All rights reserved.