



Give your favorite dishes a healthy overhaul with these simple suggestions.

## **Recipe Makeovers: 5 Tips for Healthier Dishes...from The Mayo Clinic Diet**

Can you count your grandmother's beloved bread pudding as a healthy recipe? Scrumptious as it may be with four cups of whole milk, one stick of butter & four eggs, you probably wouldn't find it on a list of healthy recipes. But you don't have to remove it from your recipe box. Just modify that bread pudding with a few simple change-ups, & you've got another healthy recipe for your collection — not a fat & calorie disaster. Here are five techniques you can use to help create healthy recipes. Remember, these are just some examples. Use your imagination & experiment to find other ways to create healthy recipes — maybe you can even serve them to Grandma!

### **1. Reduce the amount of fat, sugar & salt**

You can often reduce the amount of fat, sugar & salt without sacrificing flavor in healthy recipes. Use these general guidelines:

**Fat.** For baked goods, use half the butter, shortening or oil & replace the other half with unsweetened applesauce, mashed banana or prune puree. You can also use commercially prepared fruit-based fat substitutes found in the baking aisle of most grocery stores.

**Sugar.** Reduce the amount of sugar by one-third to one-half. Instead, add spices such as cinnamon, cloves, allspice & nutmeg, or flavorings such as vanilla extract or almond flavoring to boost sweetness.

**Salt.** For most main dishes, salads, soups & other foods, you can reduce the salt by half or even eliminate it. You can reduce salt by half in baked goods that don't require yeast too. For foods that require yeast, you may need to experiment: Some salt may be necessary for leavening to keep baked goods from being too dense or flat.

### **2. Make a healthy substitution**

Healthy substitutions not only reduce the amount of fat, calories & salt in your recipes but also can boost the nutritional content.

**Pasta.** Use whole-wheat pasta instead of enriched pasta. You'll triple the fiber & reduce the number of calories.

**Milk.** Prepare a dessert with fat-free milk instead of whole milk to save 66 calories & almost 8 grams of fat per cup.

**Meat.** When making casseroles, scale back on meat, poultry or fish & increase the amount of vegetables. You'll save on calories & fat while gaining more vitamins, minerals & fiber.

### 3. Cut back some ingredients

In some recipes, you can eliminate an ingredient altogether or scale back the amount you use.

**Toppings.** Eliminate items you generally add out of habit or for appearance, such as frosting, coconut or whipped-cream toppings, which are all high in fat & calories.

**Condiments.** Cut condiments, such as pickles, olives, butter, mayonnaise, syrup, jelly & mustard, which can contain a lot of salt, sugar, fat & calories. Use low-sodium soy sauce in a smaller amount than a recipe calls for to decrease the amount of sodium.

**Cheese.** If a recipe calls for 1 cup of shredded cheddar cheese, use 1/2 cup instead.

### 4. Change cooking & prep techniques

There are several healthy cooking techniques that can capture the flavor & nutrients of a well-loved recipe without adding excessive amounts of fat, oil or salt. Try these preparation techniques for healthy recipes.

**Cooking method.** Healthy cooking techniques include braising, broiling, grilling, poaching, sautéing & steaming.

**Basting liquid.** If the directions say to baste the meat or vegetables in oil or drippings, use a small amount of wine, fruit juice, vegetable juice or fat-free vegetable broth instead.

**Nonstick cookware.** Using nonstick pans or spraying pans with nonstick spray will further reduce the amount of fat & calories added to your meals.

### 5. Downshift your speed & downsize the portion

No matter how much you reduce, switch or omit ingredients, some recipes may still be high in sugar, fat or salt. You can help your diet by not rushing through meals & cutting back on the portion size too.

**Slow down.** Eat your meals more slowly to give your body a chance to register the fact that you're filling up. Put your fork down between bites if necessary. You'll eat less in the long run.

**Check portion sizes.** Many portions today are so large you may not realize what a true portion or serving is. Train yourself by using smaller plates, spoons & cups, & learn to use common visual cues to understand servings — one serving of whole-grain cooked pasta is about the same size as a hockey puck, for instance.

### Putting it all together to create healthy recipes

Before plunging ahead with a recipe, look it over & think about what you can change to turn it into a healthy recipe. Make notes of any alterations so that you can refer to them the next time you prepare the recipe. You may have to make the recipe a few times before you get the results you want, but finding the right combination of ingredients — for the desired taste, consistency & nutrients — is well worth the trouble.