

Give your meals a makeover

How to eat quality instead of quantity. *by Karen Giles-Smith*

Makeovers are hot. Flip through the channels of your TV or the pages of a magazine and you're bound to see someone or something being revamped: hair and makeup, wardrobes, houses, backyards, cars and even weddings. How about giving your favorite recipes a makeover! According to the USDA 2005 Dietary Guidelines, there are many good reasons to do just that.

Americans often get too many calories, but not enough vitamins and minerals. That's because we tend to choose too many foods that are nutrient-challenged: foods that are high in calories but low in nutrients. What are we missing? Most adults and children don't get enough vitamin E, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and fiber. Lack of these key nutrients can lead to an increased risk of chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis. To give meals a nutrition makeover, just add nutrient-rich foods.

Add the following nutrient-rich foods to your favorite recipes, serve them as side dishes to round out your meals, or enjoy them as snacks:

- Brightly colored fruits and 100% fruit juices
- Vibrant colored vegetables and potatoes
- Whole, fortified and fiber-rich grain foods
- Low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt
- Lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

Think of your favorite recipes and how you might add at least one nutrient-rich food. Crave chili? Top it with low-fat cheese and serve it with baked whole-grain tortilla chips or cornbread. Have a passion for pasta? Try whole wheat or "plus" pasta and add diced or grated fresh vegetables to bottled pasta sauce. Need motivation to eat more fruits and

vegetables? Serve them with a yogurt-based dip or with low-fat cheese.

In recipes, nutrient-rich ingredients can replace nutrient-void ingredients. This is a great way to pump up nutrition while keeping calories in check. Let's use dinner as an example, since it's the time when families are most likely to eat together.

Try the tips below from NutrientRichFoods.org:

- Use 90-95% lean ground beef in tacos, chili and spaghetti sauce. Protein-rich beef boosts your intake of vitamin B12, zinc and iron.
- Toss a multi-hued salad of dark greens such as spinach or romaine lettuce with cherry tomatoes, orange or yellow peppers and purple onion. The more colors, the wider variety of nutrients you get. Top with chopped hard-cooked egg for high-quality protein, B vitamins, vitamin E and iron.

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Recipe substitutions to make meals more nutritious

Regular cheddar cheese	Reduced fat cheddar cheese
Cream cheese	Neufchatel cheese
Mayonnaise or sour cream	Low-fat plain yogurt or low-fat versions
Whipped cream	Chilled and whipped evaporated milk
Oils, butter or margarine	applesauce or pureed fruit (1 to 1 ratio)
Shortening (for pie crust)	½ nonfat cream cheese and ½ margarine
Shortening to coat pans	Cooking spray
Fat for sautéing	Use less
Oil packed tuna	Water-packed tuna
Salami, pastrami, bologna	Lean roast beef or turkey
Fish sticks	Bread own fish with whole-wheat bread crumbs, light margarine and lemon juice
Regular bacon	Canadian bacon
Regular ground beef	Extra-lean ground beef or lean ground turkey
Pork sausage	Turkey sausage
Porterhouse steak or chuck	Beef tenderloin or top round
Pork loin	Pork tenderloin
Chicken with skin	Chicken without skin (remove before or after cooking)
All-purpose flour	In baked goods, use white whole wheat flour or use whole wheat flour for half of the all-purpose flour
Dry bread crumbs	Rolled oats or crushed bran cereal
Enriched pasta	Whole-wheat pasta or “plus” pasta
White bread	Whole-wheat bread
White rice	Brown rice, wild rice, bulgur or pearl barley

Easy Potatoes Au Gratin

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs package of frozen southern-style hash brown potatoes, (thawed)
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 10-ounce can cream of chicken soup (can also use cream of mushroom)
- 1 cup fat-free or light sour cream
- 2 tablespoons margarine, melted
- 1-1/2 cups shredded reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese
- 24 broccoli spears
- Ground pepper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly coat a 13"x9" baking dish with canola cooking spray. Combine potatoes, onion, soup, sour cream, margarine, cheese, and pepper in a bowl; mix well. Spoon mixture into prepared baking dish and bake uncovered for 45 minutes. Arrange the broccoli spears around the edge of the baking dish and bake another 15 minutes or until gratin is nice and bubbly and broccoli is just tender. Season with pepper to taste.

Calories: 290 Total Fat: 10g Saturated Fat: 5g Cholesterol: 25mg Sodium: 550mg Calcium: 250mg Daily Value Protein: 12g Carbohydrates: 39g Dietary Fiber: 6g

Recipe makeover by Elaine Magee, MPH, RD, "Recipe Doctor" for the WebMD Weight Loss Clinic and author of the book, *Fry Light Fry Right*.



- Try whole wheat (or “plus”) macaroni in macaroni and cheese—a tasty way to enjoy a whole grain food and calcium-rich dairy.
- Savor a stir-fry made with lean pork strips, shredded cabbage and crunchy water chestnuts. Serve over enriched white rice for B vitamins and iron.
- For a sizzling salad, grill steak with a variety of veggies such as Portobello mushrooms, zucchini, peppers, tomatoes and onions. Slice and place atop colorful salad greens.
- For a tangy taste, top a baked potato with plain low-fat yogurt and fresh herbs. You'll get potassium from the potato and the yogurt.

Shari Steinbach, registered dietitian and healthy living manager with Meijer, Inc. in Grand Rapids, stocks her kitchen's fridge and cupboards with these healthy basics so she can make meals and snacks more nutritious in a snap. “These seemingly small fixings add so much more nutrition,” she says:

- **King Arthur's® white whole wheat flour:** Substitute for enriched white flour in equal parts when making baked goods such as muffins and quick breads or when breading something
- **Ground flax and wheat germ:** Sprinkle on cooked cereal or add to baked goods
- **Powdered milk:** Add to pudding or baking mixes to boost the calcium and protein content
- **Frozen fruits and vegetables, whole wheat or “plus” pasta:** Add to soups and to frozen or boxed dinner mixes
- **Fresh, frozen or dried fruit:** Add to oatmeal and yogurt; Toss salads with dried fruit (raisins, cranberries or cherries)
- **Yogurt:** Top baked potatoes with plain Greek yogurt; top desserts with vanilla yogurt

To get nutritious, kid-appealing meals on the table in less time and with less stress, visit MealMakeoverMoms.com. If you're a mom, you can join the free Meal Makeover Moms' Club and submit a recipe-in-need to Recipe Rescue on MealMakeoverMoms.com. Bissex and Weiss periodically select submitted recipes to revamp and feature them on their Web site and in their cookbooks.

Do you have a favorite dish that needs a nutrition makeover? Check out the cookbooks on the market that transform popular recipes into more nutritious versions, such as *The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers, Improving the Way Your Family Eats, One Meal at a Time* by The Meal Makeover Moms, registered dietitians Janice Newell Bissex and Liz Weiss. The Meal Makeover Moms give family favorite recipes new life by “weaving in” fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy oils and more.

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