

Not-So-Extreme Recipe Makeovers

You can stick to healthier eating patterns and still enjoy most of your old favorite recipes! Many recipes can be made healthier without much change in the taste or texture.

Make notes about the changes you try, so you can refer to them the next time you make that recipe. You may have to make the recipe a few times before you get the results you want. Have fun experimenting!

1. Use less fat.

- For **baked goods**, replace half the butter or oil with unsweetened applesauce, mashed banana or prune puree.
- Make a **pie** with only a top crust, or use a graham cracker crust.
- **When frying**, use nonstick spray or only a very small amount of oil. Add a little broth, vegetable juice, wine or water if needed, before you heat the pan.
- Replace regular **mayonnaise** with light mayonnaise or half light mayonnaise and half fat-free sour cream.
- Use **cheese** as you would use a spice or a garnish, not as a main ingredient. In quiches or similar recipes, put cheese on the top only.
- Choose a lean cut of **meat**: look for cuts from the loin or round, and avoid prime grade meats, which have higher fat content. Trim visible fat.
- **Chicken skin** should not be eaten but it can be left on through cooking to give additional flavor or protect meat from drying out.

2. Use less sugar.

- **Reduce** the amount of sugar in baking recipes (cakes, cookies, muffins, pies) by one-third to one-half.
- Spices, vanilla extract, citrus zest or other flavorings give a sweet **flavor without calories**.
- Remember that white sugar, brown sugar, corn syrup, maple syrup and honey all have significant numbers of calories and no nutritive value.

3. Make a healthy replacement.

- **Grains**: Use whole grain breads and pastas in place of white breads and pastas. In baking, use half white flour and half whole wheat flour until you are used to the taste and texture of whole wheat. Use brown rice or other whole grains instead of white rice.
- **Butter or margarine**: Cook with cooking spray, olive oil or canola oil. For baking and table use, use a trans fat free spread such as Promise Buttery Spread or Smart Balance.
- **Eggs**: Replace half to three-fourths of the whole eggs called for in a recipe with 2 egg whites or ¼ cup egg substitute, for each egg. This works for baked goods and for omelets, frittatas and quiches too.
- **Dairy foods**:
 - For 2% or whole milk, use nonfat or 1% milk.
 - For cream or half-and-half, use fat-free half-and-half, evaporated skim milk or low-fat milk.
 - For sour cream, use low-fat sour cream or nonfat yogurt (or buttermilk for baking).
 - For regular cheese, use reduced fat cheese.
 - For cream cheese, use light cream cheese or cottage cheese smoothed in the blender with a little skim milk.

4. Use a healthy cooking method.

- Broil, grill, bake, roast, steam, microwave, poach or boil foods instead of frying.
- Use nonstick pans or spray pans with nonstick cooking spray.

5. Reduce the portion size of higher fat and higher calorie foods. Smaller portions have less fat and fewer calories!

- Meat should take up about one-fourth of your plate, whole grains another fourth, and fruits and vegetables one-half of the plate.
- Bake smaller cookies and muffins.
- Cut cakes, pies and brownies into smaller pieces.
- Serve on smaller plates, which will make the smaller portions look bigger.

6. Reduce sodium.

- You can eliminate the salt in most recipes without significantly altering the flavor. For baked goods you may want to use just a pinch of salt.
- Choose reduced-sodium canned vegetables. Frozen vegetables often have less sodium than canned. Canned vegetables such as beans can be rinsed to reduce the sodium if there are not low-sodium varieties available.
- Use reduced-sodium prepared broths.
- Ketchup, mustard, soy sauce (even reduced sodium varieties) are all high in sodium. Use sparingly.
- Use unsalted nuts.

7. Choose recipes with appropriate calorie count, fat and sodium content, or modify recipes as needed.

The guidelines below are used by Eating Well, a bimonthly magazine and website (www.eatingwell.com) that are excellent sources of healthy recipes. You also could use these guidelines to select prepared meals or restaurant items when nutrition information is available.

Category	Calories	Saturated Fat	Sodium
Entrees	≤ 500	≤ 5 g	≤ 500 mg
Side dishes, muffins, breads	≤ 250	≤ 3 g	≤ 360 mg
Desserts	≤ 350	≤ 3 g	≤ 360 mg
Per-unit items (e.g., cookies, appetizers)	≤ 120	≤ 2 g	≤ 360 mg
Sauces and dressings (per tablespoon)	≤ 100	≤ 1 g	≤ 140 mg
Combination Meals (meal that includes a serving of meat/poultry/fish plus a side starch)	≤ 600	≤ 7 g	≤ 750mg
Complete Meals (meal that includes a serving of meat/poultry/fish plus a side starch and a vegetable)	≤ 750	≤ 7 g	≤ 750 mg

Wondering about the nutrition information for the recipes you use? Try the online recipe calculator at <http://www.sparkrecipes.com> .

From www.mayoclinic.com, www.cooking.com, medicinenet.com, brighamandwomens.org, www.eatingwell.com, www.webmd.com