

LOW FAT COOKING AND HOW TO MODIFY A RECIPE

Diet related diseases like heart disease, obesity, cancer and diabetes greatly affect the quality of life. The need to manage these diseases with proper diet and a growing health-consciousness has brought awareness in people to explore new ways of cooking and eating. There are many sources to draw from including low-fat cookbooks and the latest sources are the numerous web sites that offer low-fat recipes.

It is important to remember that while fats, 'ghee' or oils bring richness and taste to the food, they also contain twice the amount of calories from carbohydrate or protein. Besides being a concentrated source of calories they are readily converted and stored as body fat. The kind and amounts of fats and oils used will determine if a recipe is heart-healthy or not. This section of the book will give you tips on making your favorite recipes healthier.

Making your favorite recipes healthier

With a little practice, you can turn any favorite recipe into a healthy dish.

- Change the cooking recipe: Instead of frying, bake, boil, broil or steam the food item. This will significantly reduce the amount of fat you consume.
- Using nonstick pans: Coating baking pans with vegetable cooking spray rather than using ghee or oil.
- Sauteeing: Sauteeing foods in water, wine, or fruit juice rather than oil or ghee.
- Removing or cutting down oils from curry, dal, sambar or rasam: Cool the curry after cooking, with a tea spoon remove the oil from the surface.

Use a plastic degreaser constructed like a pitcher with a spout that allows the liquid to be poured from the bottom instead of the top.

- Trimming fat from poultry, beef or pork: Remove the skin of the chicken or turkey. Trim visible fat from beef or pork before cooking.

The following table shows how you can substitute ingredients to make your recipe healthier;

Food Item	Substitute with:
Cream	Evaporated Skim Milk
Whole Milk	Skim Milk or 1% Milk
1 cup ghee	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegetable oil
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup ghee	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegetable oil
Regular cheese	low fat cheese or skim milk cheese
Cream cheese	light cream cheese
Butter	Margarine
Mayonnaise	Light mayonnaise or reduce calorie mayonnaise
Salad dressing	Reduced calorie, light or fat free salad dressing
Regular gelatin	Sugar-free gelatin mix or fruit juice mixed with unflavored gelatin
1 Whole egg	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup egg substitute 2 egg whites or 1 egg white and 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
1 Ounce baking chocolate	3 tablespoons cocoa powder and 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 Can condensed cream soup	Homemade white sauce (1 cup skim milk + 2tablespoons flour + 2 tablespoons margarine)
Cream of celery soup	1 cup of white sauce + ¼ cup chopped celery
Cream of mushroom soup	1 cup white sauce + 1 cup chopped mushroom
Cream of chicken soup	1 ½ cups white sauce + 1 chicken bouillon cube
Fat in baked recipes	use no more than 1-2 tablespoons oil per cup of flour: increase liquid slightly to add extra moistness
Syrup packed canned fruit	Juice-packed canned fruit
2 Tablespoons flour (as thickener)	1 table spoon cornstarch or arrowroot
Sugar in baked recipes	Reduce amount by ½ the original amount: use no more that ½ cup added sweetener (sugar, honey, molasses, etc) per cup of flour. Add vanilla extract, cinnamon, and nutmeg to increase sweetness.
Baking powder	Low-sodium baking powder
Salt in recipes	Reduce amount or eliminate; use spices and herbs
Garlic, onion and celery salt	Use garlic, onion and celery powder
Fried items	Bake if possible or brush items lightly with olive or canola oil and bake

Nimesh Bhargava, MS, RD, CNSD, MBA is a chief dietitian at the Westchester Medical center in Valhalla, New York. He is an Adjunct Professor at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, New York. He can be contacted by email nimesh777@yahoo.com