

Nutrition Matters

Tips For Low-Fat Cooking

Are you looking for ways to trim excess fat from your family's meals? If so, this information will help you get started.

Cutting back on fat in your diet is important for heart health, cancer prevention and overall health. Making small changes in how and what you cook can make a big difference in your fat intake.

Try a few of the tips that interest you and practice these until they become a habit. Then try a few more. Before you know it, you'll be on your way to living with less fat – and enjoying it!

For Starters – Soups, Salads and Dips

- For cream soup recipes, try using plain low-fat yogourt, 2%, 1%, skim or evaporated milk instead of cream. Or try a fat-free soup thickener - pureed cooked vegetables (squash, potatoes, carrots), noodles, legumes, rice or barley.
- Make soups or stews a day ahead and refrigerate. Skim off any fat that hardens on top.
- Use the following high-fat salad ingredients sparingly: salad dressing, bacon bits, high-fat cheese and croutons.
- Blend your own salad dressing for less fat and more flavour. Change your favourite recipes by cutting the amount of oil in half. Add a little sugar, orange or apple juice to cut the bite of the vinegar.
- For mayonnaise-based dressings and dips use "light" mayonnaise-type dressing and replace half with plain low-fat yogourt or buttermilk.
- Flavoured vinegars (e.g. blueberry or raspberry) can stand alone as a simple dressing
- Traditional dippers like potato chips and taco chips are high in fat. Better choices are raw vegetables – they're tasty and fat free.



Moving On To Main Dishes

- Meat can be one of the higher sources of fat in the diet. Whether it's beef, pork, lamb, or chicken, plan for no more than 3 ounces or 90 grams per serving at any one meal.
- Picture what a serving looks like with these examples: $\frac{1}{2}$ chicken breast; 1 loin pork chop; 2 loin lamb chops; sliced roast or a fillet of fish about the size of a deck of cards.
- There are high and low-fat choices of meat and poultry. Choose lean cuts such as the following.
Beef: sirloin, eye of the round, round steak and roasts, rib eye, rump, strip sirloin, T-bone and wing steaks, stewing beef, flank steak.
Veal: all cuts are relatively lean.
Pork: leg butt roast, picnic shoulder roast, tenderloin end roast, centre cut loin roast.
Poultry: white poultry meat has half the fat of dark poultry meat.
- Remove all visible fat from meat and skin from poultry before cooking.
- Instead of frying, use a low-fat cooking method...broiling, baking, grilling. To prevent drying and to add flavour, baste with wine, lemon juice or broth. Poaching and braising are good cooking methods too.
- Invest in a non-stick frying pan. Sauté with less fat.
- For stir frying, omit the oil and steam fry in a little tomato juice, bouillon or chicken stock.

Main Dishes, continued

- Prepare more mixed dishes such as stews and casseroles that combine small amounts of meat with pasta or rice and vegetables.
- The next time you make your favourite meat sauce for spaghetti, cut back on the meat and add more vegetables like mushrooms, eggplant or zucchini. When you make chili, add an extra can of kidney beans to make the meat go farther.
- Make more meatless dishes like vegetarian lasagna, baked beans, pasta with a chunky tomato vegetable sauce, or rice and kidney bean casserole.
- Pizza dough is low in fat but toppings like bacon, pepperoni, salami and cheeses are full of fat. Try any of these toppings: mushrooms, green or red peppers, sliced chicken, onion, a sprinkling of part-skim mozzarella or goat cheese.
- Serve meat, fish or poultry with low-fat accompaniments like cranberry relish, chili sauce, chutney or a spicy mustard. Or make low-fat gravy by thickening bouillon cubes with cornstarch.

Low-Fat Lasagna

1 tbsp.	vegetable oil	15 mL
2 or 3	cloves garlic, minced	2 or 3
2	onions, diced	2
1	green pepper, chopped	1
1 cup	mushrooms, sliced	250 mL
1	large carrot, diced	1
1	celery stalk, diced	1
1	19 oz can tomatoes	540 mL
2	5½ oz cans tomato paste	156 mL
1 tsp.	each: dried oregano, basil, parsley	5 mL
½ tsp.	chili powder	2 mL
1	bay leaf	1
½ lb.	lean ground beef	225 g
1	egg	1
2 cups	low-fat (2%) cottage cheese	500 mL
9	lasagna noodles, cooked or oven-ready	9
½ cup	grated Parmesan cheese	125 mL
¼ lb.	skim milk mozzarella	110 g

Don't Forget the Vegetables

- Vegetables are naturally low in fat. Serve vegetables plain or sprinkle them with chives or parsley or a little lemon juice.
- Spoon salsa, low-fat yogourt (less than 2% M.F.), or low-fat sour cream (less than 6% M.F.) on a baked potato.

Winding up with Desserts

- Fresh fruit is a great low fat dessert for any occasion.
- Instead of a fruit pie, make an fruit crisp with half the fat.
- For a refreshing end to a meal have a fruit sorbet as it contains less fat than ice cream.
- Angel food cake contains only a trace of fat. Serve it with fresh fruit or a sauce made with plain yogourt and frozen berries.
- Make some meringues for a fat-free cookie.

How to Adapt Family Favourites

You can adapt your favourite recipes to reduce the fat content. Use this recipe as a guide. The original recipe had three times as much oil, double the meat, cheese and eggs and used higher fat varieties of meat and cheese.

Directions

1. In a large saucepan, heat oil and sauté garlic, onions, green pepper, mushrooms, carrot and celery. Add tomatoes (including the juice), tomato paste, oregano, basil, parsley, chili powder and bay leaf.
2. Brown meat in a large non-stick skillet. Drain off excess fat. Add meat to tomato sauce. Cover and simmer 1 to 1½ hours.
3. Beat egg and combine with cottage cheese.
4. Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce on the bottom of a 13 x 9-inch (3.5L) baking dish. Cover with a layer of noodles. Spoon some of the tomato sauce over top and then some of the cottage cheese mixture. Repeat this layering 2 more times. Sprinkle with Parmesan and mozzarella.
5. Bake in 350°F oven for 45 minutes; let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

