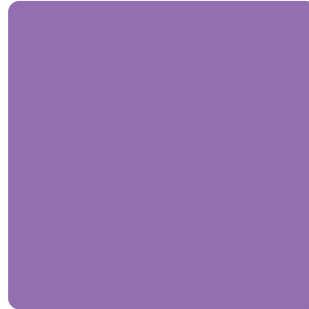


The Cook's Companion



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Your commitment to improving the quality of health and life for all Utahns is to be applauded.



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Check Your Health (CYH) is your source for good information about eating healthy and getting active. Recently, a group of CYH nutrition experts sat around the table brainstorming ideas to help you make healthy eating choices. Someone mentioned a cookbook, and the questions flew fast and furious. What kind of cookbook? Whose recipes? Low fat? Low carbohydrate? Low salt? Weight loss? Feel better cookbook? Then we wondered, “Is another cookbook really the answer?” Finally, we decided that what would help most is a guide for all of the cookbooks already out there. Thus, *The Cook’s Companion - A Guide to Eating Healthy from Check Your Health* was born.

This guide is designed to make eating healthy easy. It will help you plan menus, shop for healthy foods and make tasty meals or treats while using your own cookbooks. You will learn that with a little planning, substituting, and creativity, eating will be more fun, flavor-filled, and healthy for you and your family than you ever thought possible.

The Guidelines

Check Your Health believes that the best advice for eating healthy is included in the guidelines recently released jointly by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. The guidelines are: Maintain a healthy body weight by eating healthy foods and exercising often. It is important to reach a balance between the amount of calories you consume and the amount of calories that you burn.

- Regular physical activity can help to reduce your chances of getting high blood pressure, heart disease, a stroke, certain cancers, and the most common form of diabetes.
- Eat a variety of foods to get the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need for good health.
- Choose to eat more of the vegetables, fruits, and whole grain products that provide needed vitamins, minerals, fiber, and complex carbohydrates. This will help you lower your intake of fat.



- Choose foods low in fat, saturated fat, trans-fats and cholesterol to reduce your risk of heart attack, certain types of cancer and to help you maintain a healthy weight.
 - Choose foods low in sugars. A diet with lots of sugars has too many calories and too few nutrients and can contribute to tooth decay.
 - Choose foods that are low in salt and sodium to help reduce

The Guide

your risk of high blood pressure. Consume less than 2300 mg (1 teaspoon of salt) of sodium per day. Eat plenty of potassium-rich fruits and vegetables instead.

- If you drink alcoholic beverages, drink sensibly. Alcoholic beverages supply calories, but little or no nutrients. Drinking alcohol is the cause of many health problems and accidents and can lead to addiction.

Putting the Guide and the Guidelines Together

In the following sections, you will find many ways to use your cookbooks to make the recipes you enjoy. This guide is designed to be on the counter by your cookbook as you create healthy new mealtime adventures for you and your family. For more help creating a healthier lifestyle, visit www.checkyourhealth.org. We wish you the best of health!

Grocery shopping and menu planning can be enjoyable. If you make these simple steps a part of your weekly routine, planning for meals and shopping for healthy foods will become an experience to look forward to. You will find that you save money at the store and come home with grocery bags full of healthy foods.

Menu Planning Tips:

- Set aside one day each week to do your menu planning. Plan meals at least one week in advance. Write down each dish that you or your family would like to try.
- Check your cupboards at home to see what needs to be used up first and choose menu items that will help you use them.
- Look at grocery store ads to help you plan meals. For example if broccoli is on sale, use it in your week's menu by making broccoli soup one night, and steamed broccoli as a side dish on a different night.
- Gather your recipes and make your grocery list from the ingredients on those recipes. Cross off the ingredients that you already have on hand. Add regularly used items such as eggs, milk, and bread to your list.
- Write each day's menu on a calendar. By planning ahead and making a list, grocery shopping can be done only once a week.
- Refer to the portion plate on the next page to help you plan your meals. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, one quarter with whole grains, one quarter or less with lean meat or protein.

Grocery Shopping Tips:

- Eat before you go grocery shopping. Try not to shop when you are hungry. You will be less tempted to buy junk food and unnecessary items.
- Stick to your shopping list to avoid impulse buying.
- Use the “stoop-and-rise” method. Bargains can often be found on the top and bottom shelves where less observant shoppers miss them.
- Compare prices and buy the least expensive.
- Buy healthy. Choose 1% or skim milk and other low or non-fat dairy products. Buy whole grain breads and cereals that have the first ingredient listed as “100 percent whole wheat”, “whole grain” or “whole oats”. A good rule of thumb is to choose products with at least 3 grams of fiber (or more) per serving.
- Try a new recipe once a week and continue to find new recipes. Keep a list of recipes and refer back to it when you plan your menus. Your list will gradually grow, as will your cooking skills!



www.theportionplate.com

By making simple modifications to some of your favorite recipes, you can make healthier meals for you and your family. This section includes dozens of recipe substitutions, some simple tips to reduce the amount of fat in your cooking, and other useful ideas for healthy eating. Try something new today!

Substitutions

Do you ever wonder what to use in place of high-fat or high-calorie ingredients? The following list includes ideas for changing dairy products, fats and oils, meat, poultry, fish and eggs. Other ingredients like soy sauce and chocolate chips are also included. Notice the calories and fat you will save by making these small changes.

10 Tips for Healthy Cooking

These cooking tips make it easier to create healthier recipes. Review this section again before you plan your weekly menu, and when trying a new recipe, to see how you can make a healthier meal.

1. Use cooking methods that do not need added fat. These include baking, braising, grilling, poaching, roasting, sauté, stir-fry and steaming. (See Chapter 10 for definitions of these methods.)
2. Use cooking spray, non-stick cooking pans, or small amounts of olive oil when cooking. For example, you can sauté vegetables in 1 teaspoon or less of olive oil in a non-stick pan. Another suggestion: Keep olive oil in a pump or spray bottle by the stove. Use a pastry brush to spread about three pumps (1 tsp.) of oil in the pan.
3. As often as you can, use recipes that feature vegetables, fruits, beans, seafood, and whole grain products because all are naturally low in fat.
4. Skim off any visible fat before reheating soups and gravies.
5. Try salsa on a baked potato instead of butter.
6. Increase the amount of spices and seasonings in the recipe to add flavor when high-fat ingredients are removed. Taste and adjust seasonings to your liking.
7. Since sugar is a natural preservative, a recipe with a reduced amount of sugar will not keep as long as the original recipe. Freeze food in portions that can be defrosted as needed – as long as the recipe is suitable for freezing.
8. Choose rice, beans, cereals, pasta, and whole grains to get your essential nutrients every day.
9. Top casseroles or salad with bran cereals for added fiber and crunch.
10. Use beans or lentils in place of ground meat in recipes to add fiber and reduce fat.



Healthy Substitutions

Ingredient	Substitution	Calories Saved	Fat Saved
Dairy Products			
4 oz. cheddar cheese 458 calories 38 g of fat	4 oz. reduced-fat cheddar cheese (less than 5 g fat per oz) OR 4 oz. fat-free cheddar cheese	258 258	32 g 38 g
4 oz. feta cheese 304 calories 24 g of fat	2 oz feta + 2-oz fat-free cottage cheese	112	12 g
8 oz. cream cheese 640 calories 64 g of fat	8 oz. light cream cheese OR 8 oz. fat-free cream cheese OR 8 oz. fat-free ricotta cheese	80 400 493	24 g 64 g 64 g
1 cup sour cream 492 calories 48 g of fat	1 cup fat-free sour cream OR 1 cup fat-free plain yogurt OR 1 cup pureed fat-free cottage cheese + 1 Tbsp. lemon juice	168 360 332	19 g 48 g 48 g
1 cup heavy cream 792 calories 79 g of fat	1 cup evaporated fat-free milk	744	79 g
1 cup whole milk 156 calories 8 g of fat	1 cup fat-free milk	64	8 g
1 cup cottage cheese 240 calories 8 g of fat	1 cup fat-free cottage cheese	80	8 g
Fats And Oils			
½ cup oil (for baking) 977 calories 109 g of fat	½ cup applesauce OR ¼ cup applesauce + ¼ cup buttermilk OR ½ cup baby food prunes	925 922 799	109 g 108 g 109 g
½ cup oil for marinades or salad dressings) 977 calories 109 g of fat	½ cup low fat or non fat chicken broth OR ½ cup unsweetened pineapple juice	945 894	109 g 109 g
½ cup. margarine, shortening, or butter (for baking) 791 calories 90 g of fat	½ cup reduced- calorie margarine OR ½ cup applesauce OR ¼ cup applesauce + ¼ cup buttermilk OR ½ cup baby food prunes	421 760 761 681	48 g 92 g 91 g 92 g

Healthy Substitutions

Ingredient	Substitution	Calories Saved	Fat Saved
Fats And Oils (continued...)			
½ cup margarine or butter (for icings) 791 calories 90 g of fat	½ cup marshmallow crème	392	92 g
2 Tbsp. oil (for sautéing) 240 calories 27 g fat	2 Tbsp. non- or low-fat broth	236	27 g
	OR 2 Tbsp. unsweetened Pineapple juice	223	27 g
	OR 2 tbsp. dry wine	221	27 g
1 Tbsp. regular mayonnaise 100 calories 11 g of fat	1 Tbsp. light mayonnaise	50	6 g
	OR 1 Tbsp. fat-free plain yogurt	83	11 g
Meats, Poultry, Fish, & Eggs			
1 pound ground beef (80% lean) 1,202 calories 96 g of fat	1 pound lean ground beef (95% lean)	350	27 g
	OR 1 pound ground turkey breast (99% fat-free)	356	54 g
3 slices pork bacon (¾ oz. total) 123 calories 11 g of fat	3 slices turkey bacon (¾ oz. total)	42	5 g
	OR 1 tbsp. bacon bits	80	8 g
	OR 2 slices lean Canadian bacon	70	7 g
3 oz. roasted chicken thigh (with skin) 223 calories 17 g of fat	3 oz. roasted chicken breast (without skin)	70	10 g
6 ½ oz. canned oil-packed tuna 343 calories 19 g of fat	6 ½ oz. canned water-packed tuna	129	18 g
1 whole egg 83 calories 6 g of fat	2 egg whites	50	6 g
	OR ¼ cup egg substitute	30	4 g

Healthy Substitutions

Ingredient	Substitution	Calories Saved	Fat Saved
Other Ingredients			
1 cup chocolate chips 840 calories 48 g of fat	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of chocolate chips OR $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of chocolate chips OR $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of chocolate chips	215	15 g
(This substitution works for all varieties of chocolate chips.)		286	20 g
		430	30 g
1 oz. unsweetened chocolate (squares) 176 calories 14 g of fat	3 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder	103	12 g
1 cup shredded coconut 466 calories 33 g of fat	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded coconut OR 1 tsp. coconut flavoring	233	16 g
		466	33 g
4 oz. sliced olives 167 calories 15 g of fat	2 oz. sliced olives	83	8 g
1 cup condensed canned cream soup 314 calories 23 g of fat	1 cup condensed canned 99% fat-free cream soup OR 1 cup low-fat cream soup	112	13 g
		29	18 g
1 cup sugar 774 calories 0 g of fat	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar	192	0 g
1 cup walnuts 785 calories 78 g of fat	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup walnuts	385	37 g
1 cup regular ice cream 260 calories 14 g of fat	1 cup non-fat frozen yogurt OR 1 cup non-fat ice cream	40	14 g
		60	14 g
1 cup all-purpose white flour 444 calories 1 g of fat	$\frac{1}{2}$ whole wheat flour OR $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose white flour + $\frac{1}{4}$ cup crushed bran cereal	176	0 g
		40	0 g
Salt			
1 tsp. soy sauce 3 calories 0 g of fat 289 mg of sodium	1 tsp. light soy sauce		Sodium Saved 160 m
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Iodized salt 0 calories 0 g of fat 1,163 mg of sodium	0- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Iodized salt		0-580 mg

Healthy Substitutions

Now that you know how to make your recipes lighter and healthier, here is an example of how you can do it. By simply reducing some ingredients, and substituting others, these brownies come out of the oven smelling and tasting great, and are a lot healthier for you. Notice that the original recipe has almost 3 times as much fat as the lighter one!

Fudgey Brownies	Lowfat Fudgey Brownies
<p>½ cup butter, melted 1 ½ cups powdered sugar 2/3 cup flour 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder 1 teaspoon vanilla extract 1 egg 2 Tablespoons water ¾ cup semisweet chocolate chips Dash of salt</p> <p>Melt butter in microwave. Add egg, vanilla and water.</p> <p>Stir in powdered sugar, cocoa, flour and salt.</p> <p>Add chocolate chips.</p> <p>Bake in a 9-inch square pan at 350 F for 25 minutes.</p> <p>Cut when cool.</p> <p>Yield: 16 brownies</p>	<p>1 ½ cups sugar ¼ cup plain low-fat yogurt 1 ¼ cups flour ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder 1 teaspoon vanilla extract ½ cup egg substitute or 4 egg whites 2 Tablespoons water ¾ cup semisweet chocolate chips Dash of salt 1 teaspoon baking powder Vegetable oil cooking spray</p> <p>Whisk together sugar, egg substitute, yogurt, water, and vanilla in large bowl.</p> <p>Sift flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt. Add to sugar mixture.</p> <p>Stir or whisk gently only until ingredients are moistened. Batter may be lumpy.</p> <p>Stir in chocolate morsels.</p> <p>Pour batter into a 9-inch-square pan coated with cooking spray.</p> <p>Bake at 325 F for 30 minutes. Cut into squares when cool.</p> <p>Yields 16 brownies.</p>
<p>Nutrition information per brownie: Calories: 160 Fat: 9 grams</p>	<p>Nutrition information per brownie: Calories: 160 Fat: 3.5 g</p>

The practice of snacking between meals has been blamed for “spoiling” children’s appetites and adding unwanted inches to adults’ waistlines. However, those problems come from unhealthy snacking habits.

Truth is, snacking can be healthy. The right snack at the right time will decrease your hunger, add missing nutrients to your diet, help you maintain a healthy blood sugar level, improve your mood and give you more energy. Most people notice these positive changes when they regularly eat something small (no more than 200 to 300 calories) every three to four hours.

Convenience and the availability of commercially packaged snack foods that are high in fat, sugar, preservatives and sodium are a barrier to healthy snacking. Most of the snack ideas listed below can be quickly and easily prepared at home. Not only are they healthier than most store-bought snacks, but they also taste great! Many of them can be prepared in advance and in large quantities, and are easy to grab and go.

Healthy Snacking Guidelines:

- Be aware of when and where kids do their after-school snacking.
- Offer snacks at regularly scheduled times.
- Do not let children snack in front of the television, computer or while on the telephone, because it’s more difficult to monitor portion sizes.
- Pre-portion snacks for your child or yourself into small plastic bags so they are ready to go when needed.
- Keep it simple. Eating healthy is easy to do.
- Combine foods that have carbohydrates and protein. Carbohydrates help brain functions and help maintain energy levels. Protein will keep you feeling satisfied for longer periods of time.

Carbohydrate-rich snacks

Protein-rich snacks

Fruits

Nonfat milk, yogurt, or cheese

Vegetables

Slice of extra-lean meat, fish, or chicken

Whole Grains

Beans or peas

Nuts or peanut butter

- Mix and match. Include one of each at snack time to help you achieve the mix of carbohydrates and protein and to make it more fun.
- Try not to choose highly processed foods, such as prepackaged cheese and crackers combinations, snack cakes, chips or candy bars.

Healthy Snacks

Snack Ideas

- Half of a toasted English muffin, topped with low-fat cream cheese or a sprinkle of mozzarella cheese.
- Freeze $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red and green grapes. Combine them with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of your favorite nuts.
- Baby carrots dipped in hummus.
- Half of a whole-wheat English muffin topped with 1 Tbsp. natural peanut butter and honey or jam.
- Non-fat or low-fat yogurt with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blueberries.
- A sliced apple with a mozzarella cheese stick or string cheese.
- Drain a can of water packed tuna and spread over whole-wheat crackers.
- One whole grain toaster waffle topped with 2-3 Tbsp. yogurt.
- Spread 1 Tbsp. of natural peanut butter into a celery stick and decorate with raisins.
- One small box of raisins with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup nuts.



Eating meals together as a family can be fun. Check Your Health suggests that families sit down at the dinner table and eat together at least one night each week. Sharing a meal is a great opportunity for family members to learn more about each other simply by talking together. Encourage friendly conversation at the table, by:

- Gathering everyone together to sit at the table for meals.
- Turning off the TV.
- Avoiding distractions, such as newspapers, telephones, and toys.
- Making mealtime pleasant by encouraging positive conversation. Try not to use this as a time to scold or punish your kids.

Families that eat together eat healthier meals and cooking larger quantities family makes better use of food supplies. Other benefits of eating together include improved family communication and an increased sense of security and stability for children. Therefore, children behave better and perform better in school. They also develop a sense of family traditions and values, and also learn while helping to prepare meals.

Helpful Hints on Planning and Preparing Family Mealtime

Talk with family members about how to set up your family mealtime. You might want to discuss the following questions:

- *What do we like to eat?*
- *What time is best?*
- *What kinds of things can we talk about? What should we not talk about?*
- *What behavior is okay? What is not?*

Plan family dinner menus in advance (a week, a pay period, a month, etc). This will save time and avoid costly last-minute dinners out or orders for pizza. When planning, don't try to do it all at once—start with one meal a week and add more as you can. Take time to make that meal extra special!

Family mealtime rules are important. Make rules that are clear and simple. If children understand the rules, it is easier for them to follow. Some family mealtime rules could be:

- Wash your hands before you eat.
- No eating until everyone is at the table.
- If you do not like a food, still be kind.
- Ask before you get up from the table.

Mealtime Fun

Keep foods on hand for two or three quick recipes for when you're short on time. For those evenings when you have more time, try making larger amounts of your recipe and freezing the rest for later. Family meals do not have to be complicated. Simple foods will do!

Mealtime Activity Suggestions

- *Restaurant Night.* Pretend you are at a restaurant and give every family member a role to play (example: one person takes orders, one person serves the food, etc.) Turn the lights off and eat by candlelight or put flowers on the table.
- *Have alphabet dinners.* For example, on "A" night feature asparagus, apples or avocado. Family members will learn about new foods.
- *Geography Night.* Pick a country to learn about and prepare foods that come from that country. Have each person learn one fact about the country to share at dinnertime.
- *Special Spotlight.* Choose a family member to be in the spotlight. Have a special plate that the very important person (VIP) uses when they are in the spotlight. Let the VIP choose the menu.
- *Game Night.* Make individual pizzas using English muffins for dinner and play a game. Then, take turns choosing the game.
- *Family Breakfast.* Dinner isn't the only time to share meals. Breakfast is also a great time to sit down together and start the day out right!

More Helpful Hints About Family Mealtime

- Involve the whole family. When children are allowed to participate in meal planning, preparing, serving and cleaning up, they often care more about it.
- Allow children to make menu choices. Take your child food shopping with you. Let your child choose vegetables or fruits for the meal.
- When preparing the meal, give your child a specific task like setting the table or putting bread on a plate. Let children know five minutes before dinner is ready so they can finish what they are doing.
- Teach children that cleaning up after a meal is just as important as preparing it. Involve the entire family in the clean up by making a chore chart and taking turns. Try listening to music to make clean-up go faster.
- Kids need instruction to make their way around the kitchen successfully. Take time to teach your child basic skills like reading recipes, setting up equipment, using tools like measuring utensils and can openers, and demonstrating how to prepare a variety of foods.
- Enjoy yourself in the kitchen. Approach cooking as a creative and fun activity and your child will find cooking to be fun as well.

- Uncover your child's kitchen talents. A child that likes art may enjoy arranging fresh fruit on a tray while a math whiz might quickly calculate recipe measurements.
- Assign tasks according to your child's age and development. Preschoolers love to measure, pour and stir. Older children can learn how to safely use equipment such as can openers, knives, blenders and the microwave.
- Declare "Kids Rule!" one night a week. Once kids have grasped basic cooking skills, put them in charge of planning and preparing the evening meal. Challenge older kids to be kitchen daredevils. Allow them to experiment with different food combinations and cooking techniques. Remember to praise more than criticize if you want them to keep cooking.

Teaching Kids About Nutrition

Healthful eating provides fuel for learning, growing, sports and play. What makes a food "healthful?" Healthful foods supply important nutrients, such as protein, vitamins, minerals and fiber. A wide variety of healthful foods are found in these five food groups:

- Breads, cereal, rice and pasta
- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Milk, yogurt and cheese
- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts.

Limit foods such as soft drinks and candy that supply a lot of calories but few nutrients. Try to go easy on higher-fat foods from the food groups, too, such as French fries, chips and cake.

Kids need to be taught about healthful eating. Teach them why the following guidelines are important.



Mealtime Fun

- Eat a variety of foods. Prepare family meals and snacks with different foods from the five food groups.
- Choose plenty of grain products, fruits and vegetables. Have kids add their favorites to the shopping list - then serve them for meals and snacks.
- Limit foods with fat, cholesterol, sugar and sodium. Teach kids to read Nutritional Facts on food labels to help them find foods with less fat, cholesterol, sugar and sodium.
- Balance food choices with physical activity. Encourage your kids to move more.
- Eat breakfast. Have your kids help plan breakfast with nutritious foods they like.
- Snack smart. Keep healthful, easy-to-make and easy-to-eat foods on hand for everyone to snack on! See Chapter 4 “Healthy snacking” for more ideas.



Entertaining the Healthy Way

Does the thought of entertaining scare you? It shouldn't! The key to an enjoyable gathering is to keep things simple and plan ahead. The following steps will help you do this.

1. Think ahead (4 to 6 weeks before the event)

- Choose a theme
- Make a guest list
- Pick a date and time
- Decide if it will be indoors or outside
- Decide if you will have it at home, go to a park, or pay for a hall
- Decide on the menu
- Decide on the day's activities
 - > What time to eat?
 - > What will the entertainment be?
- Order supplies
 - > Decorations, plates, plastic ware, etc.

2. Get organized (3 weeks before the event)

- Send out invitations; ask for RSVPs by a certain date and time
- Place a list of those you invited next to the phone to record RSVPs
- Purchase any forgotten items
- Ask for help from family members and friends

3. Keep it simple (2 weeks before the event)

- If you haven't received RSVPs, call to make sure they are coming
- Confirm that your helpers can still attend and what their duties will be



Entertaining the Healthy Way

4. *One week before the event*

- Purchase film, batteries
- Purchase food
- Prepare entertainment (games, crafts, movies, etc.)
- If any of the food items can be prepared or cooked and frozen and then reheated for the event, do so now

5. *One day before the event*

- Finish food preparation. If anything can be cooked and reheated, now is the time
- Clean the house and prepare the party area

6. *The day of:*

- Have fun! Remember, the party is to be enjoyed by all!

(Courtesy of Alyce Edrich, editor of The Dabbling Mum.com; where BUSY parents find advice, balance, inspiration, and how-to e-books.)

Entertaining Etiquette

Good table manners are a matter of common sense and should reflect the most logical choices. One of the most important things to remember is to be natural, without drawing attention to you. It is best to give the appearance of being confident, yet comfortable.

Posture

When eating, sit close enough to the table so each bite is brought to the mouth without having to lean forward. Sit straight at the table without sitting stiffly.

Elbows

Elbows should not be placed on the table, but kept close to the side so they don't interfere with those sitting next to you. When a hand is not in use, place it in your lap, or if it is more comfortable, rest your forearm on the edge of the table.

Table settings

An attractive table setting makes the food look and taste better and provides a positive experience for each guest. The table setting gives the host/hostess an opportunity to express creativity, while the guests see the effort that has been made in their behalf.

Place settings

Each place setting should consist of the main plate in the center, with the forks placed on the left and knives on the right. Spoons are placed to the right of the knives, and the water glass is placed at the tip of the knife. A second beverage glass would be placed to the right of the water glass. The bread and butter plate belongs at the tip of the forks, and the salad plate usually goes to the left of the forks and a little above. When no bread and butter plate is used, the salad may go at the tip of the forks. The napkin is placed directly to the left of the forks and dinner plate, but if the table is crowded, it may be placed under the forks, directly on the plate or in the center of the place setting.



Napkins

When seated at the table, if you are the guest, wait until the host/hostess has taken up his or her napkin before placing it on their laps, or when the host/hostess asks the guests to proceed. When the host/hostess picks up his/her fork, you may pick up yours and begin to eat. The napkin remains in your lap until after the meal and should then be placed loosely gathered on the table next to the plate. If you need to leave the table during the meal, the napkin should be placed on the chair and then back in the lap after you return to the table.

Entertaining the Healthy Way

Utensils

Knowing which utensils to use will increase self-confidence and foster a more relaxed atmosphere. Silverware is placed in order of its use. Always remember to begin with the silverware on the outside of the place setting and work from the outside in. If in doubt, watch the hostess or someone else at the table that is confident in using the utensils. Cut your food as it is eaten, not all at once. When finished eating, place the used fork and knife on the plate, sharp side of knife facing in, and fork next to knife.

Beverages

Wait to sip beverages until your mouth is empty and has been wiped with a napkin. The only exception to this is when your mouth has been burned with hot food; you may take a drink with food in your mouth. Do not gulp or guzzle beverages.

Conversation

When talking at the table, there should never be any food in your mouth. Remember the saying, "Don't talk with your mouth full!" Chew with your mouth closed, without talking. Guests should not draw attention to themselves by making unnecessary noise either with their mouth or with their silverware.

Seasonings and Condiments

Guests should always taste the food before asking for salt and pepper, so as not to offend the cook. When you use condiments on the table, place a portion of each condiment desired on the plate beside the food, not directly on the food itself, i.e., cranberry sauce is placed on the dinner plate, not on the meat. If there are no condiments on the table, it is not polite to ask for them.

Formal Service

Guests are almost always served from their left, and plates are cleared from their left. Drinks are served from their right and cleared from their right.

Informal Service

When a serving dish is passed around the table instead of being individually plated, it should be passed counterclockwise, to the right. You should take a reasonable portion and never take more than can be finished.

Reaching

Guests may reach for food that is close to them, as long as they do not have to stretch for it and do not reach across another guest. If the food is across the table, ask politely for it to be passed.

Finger Food

Some foods may be eaten with fingers. If you are not sure if it is acceptable, follow the example of the host/hostess or use the neater and easier way to eat the food. When finger foods are served, take the food from the serving dish and place it on the plate before eating it.

Removing Food From Mouth

If a piece of food must be removed from the mouth, do it the same way that it was put in and place it on the plate. A pit or small bone should be removed with fingers. The most important thing to remember when removing food is to do it with as little show as possible.

Natural table manners take practice, and the best place to practice is at home. If manners at the table are insisted upon at home, they will more likely become second nature. Once good table manners become automatic you will feel more relaxed and comfortable, and the conversation and food will be enjoyed much more.

Stocking Your Cupboards

Your kitchen is not just for preparing food. It is also a place to store food. Food is stored in kitchen cupboards, shelves, cabinets, refrigerators and freezers, depending on the type of food. Each of these places can also be considered a pantry. A pantry is any cool, dry place used to store food.

There are tricks to storing food well, so that it's ready to use when you need it. By keeping your pantry stocked with basic supplies, you will be able to prepare healthy meals, shop less frequently, and save money.

The key to storing food is to rotate your supply regularly. Some foods keep longer than others, so for every item you buy, write the date you buy each item directly on the bottle or can. Keep the oldest items on the front of the shelf. If you remember to check the expiration date of the item behind the one you are using, and use that next item before it expires, you will never have to throw away outdated food!

In the absence of expiration dates stamped on the food you buy, use these charts to determine the shelf life of various foods.



Stocking Your Cupboards

Food	Shelf Life	Helpful Hints
Canned vegetables Whole, crushed, or chopped tomatoes Tomato sauce Tomato paste Sweet potatoes Artichoke hearts Chilies Corn Green beans Mushrooms Peas Pumpkin	1 year	Store cans in your coolest kitchen cabinet. Choose low sodium vegetables or rinse with water before cooking to reduce the sodium
Canned Fruit – low sugar syrups Mandarin oranges Pineapple Pears Peaches Fruit cocktail	1 year	
Beans Canned: Pork and beans Baked beans Canned or dry: Red, black, chickpeas, kidney, white, pinto Dry: lentil, split pea	1 year canned 6 months to 1 year, dry	
Canned Meats Tuna (water packed) Minced clams Chicken Pink or red salmon	1 year	
Soups and Broth Chicken, vegetable and beef broth Cream soups (low fat) – mushroom, broccoli, chicken, and celery Other broth-based or water-based soups	1 year	
Herbs and Spices Salt Black pepper Rosemary Oregano Paprika Chili powder Cinnamon Thyme Curry powder	Ground, 6 months Whole (dry), 1 year	Keep in a cool spot. Replace if aroma fades. Spices can be expensive, so buy small amounts and replace when freshness is gone.

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Food	Shelf Life	Helpful Hints
Staples		Refrigerate to keep longer.
Baking powder	6 months	
Baking soda	18 months	
Corn starch	18 months	
Bouillon cubes	12 months	
Whole wheat, all-purpose flour	6-12 months	
White, brown, and confectioner's sugar	Never spoils	Pack brown sugar in an airtight container to avoid hardening.
Honey	1 month	
Olive oil	3 months	
Salad oil	6 months	
White, wine, cider vinegar	12 months	
Evaporated milk	12 months	
Dry milk	12 months	
Cooking spray	2 years	
Peanut butter	6 months	Keeps 2 months once opened.
Ketchup, barbecue sauce, chili sauce	1 year	
Bread, Pasta, Rice and Cereal		
Whole wheat bread	2-4 days, if left on counter 7-14 days, if left in refrigerator	
Macaroni, spaghetti	1 year	
Other types and sizes of noodles	1 year	
Oats	6-12 months	
Ready to eat cereal	Check date	
Tortillas	2-4 days, or 4-7 days in refrigerator	
Brown and white rice	1 year	

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Stocking Your Cupboards

Food	Shelf Life	Helpful Hints
Refrigerated foods		
Fresh fruits and vegetables	Varies, about 1 week	
Eggs	1 month	1 week for best flavor.
Milk	1 month	
Yogurt	2 weeks	
Cheese	6 months, unopened 3-4 weeks, opened	
Freezer items		
Frozen vegetables such as corn, peas, spinach, broccoli, green beans	8 months	
Frozen fruits like blueberries, strawberries, peaches and raspberries	4-6 months	
Chicken breasts	6 months	

There are times that you will find yourself without the proper measuring tool. The following guidelines will help you figure out the correct measurements and help you estimate the quantities of food you need for a recipe as you make your grocery list.

Equivalent Measures	
Dash	2 to 3 drops or less than 1/8 teaspoon [tsp.]
1 tablespoon [Tbsp.]	3 teaspoons
1/4 cup	4 tablespoons
8 ounces [oz.]	1 cup
1 pound [lb.]	16 ounces
1 pint	2 cups
1 quart	4 cups
1 gallon [gal.]	4 quarts

Stocking Your Cupboards

Food Equivalents

Food	Quantity	Is Equivalent to:
Apple	1 medium	1 cup
Banana	1 medium	1/3 cup mashed
Beans, dry	1 cup	2 to 2 1/2 cups cooked
Bread	1 1/2 slices	1 cup soft crumbs
Butter	1 stick or 1/4 pound	1/2 cup
Cheese, grated	1 pound	5 cups
Crackers, graham	14 squares	1 cup fine crumbs
Crackers, saltine	28 crackers	1 cup fine crumbs
Egg	4-5 whole	1 cup
Flour, white, all-purpose	1 pound	3 3/4 cups
Lemon	1 medium	3 tablespoon juice
Marshmallows	16 large (1" square)	1/4 pound
Noodles, cooked	8 ounce package	7 cups
Noodles, uncooked	4 ounces (1 1/2 cups)	2-3 cups cooked
Noodles, macaroni, cooked	8 ounce package	6 cups
Noodles, macaroni, uncooked	4 ounces (1 1/4 cups)	2-3 cups cooked
Noodles, spaghetti, uncooked	7 ounces	4 cups cooked
Nuts, chopped	1/2 pound	1 cup
Onion	1 medium	1/2 cup
Orange	3-4 medium	1 cup juice
Raisins	1 pound	3 1/2 cups
Rice, brown or wild	1 cup	4 cups cooked
Rice, regular	1 cup	3 cups cooked
Sugar, brown	1 pound	2 1/2 cups
Sugar, powdered	1 pound	3 1/2 cups
Sugar, white	1 pound	2 cups
Vanilla wafers	22 wafers	1 cup fine crumbs

Herbs are leaves or stems of plants that are used for flavoring food. They can be either fresh or dried. Dill, rosemary, thyme, parsley, and oregano are examples of herbs. Spices are made from the seeds, bark, or fruit of dried plants. Cinnamon, nutmeg and black pepper are examples of common spices. Using the right amounts and types of spices and herbs in a recipe is what will turn a bland, ho-hum meal into one that you'll never forget.

Buying herbs and spices

Fresh Herbs: Choose an herb like you would a flower. You want the herb to be pretty and fragrant, not wilted and bruised. The flavor comes from the herb's oils, so if the leaf or stem is broken or bruised, much of the oil and flavor will have been lost. Generally, the more smell the herb has, the more flavor it has.

Spices: There are two reasons whole spices are better than ground. First, whole spices are cheaper. Second, they produce a stronger flavor than ground, which means you use less. As with herbs, choose spices that have a strong aroma, because they will be more flavorful.

Storing herbs and spices

Wash and dry herbs after bringing them home from the store, or in from your own herb garden. Wrap herbs in a damp paper towel, seal in a zip-loc bag and store in the refrigerator. For herbs like cilantro and parsley, cut the ends of the herbs at an angle and then put them in a jar of water like you would flowers.

If dried herbs or spices are exposed to air, heat, or light, they will lose some of their oils, and be less flavorful. Keep them in tightly sealed containers in a cool, dark cabinet. If you open a container of spices or herbs and can't smell anything, or it smells musty, the flavor is likely gone.



Cooking, Drying, & Toasting herbs and spices

The flavorful oils in herbs escape quickly into the air, making it difficult to retain them in your food. To maximize flavor when using fresh herbs:

Herbs & Spices

- Chop them with a sharp knife, cut them with scissors, or tear them by hand.
- Don't chop them finely. The more you chop herbs the stronger they start smelling. These smells are the oils escaping into the air, which means fewer flavors in your food.
- Chop or tear the herbs at the last minute so the oils don't have as much time to escape.

For a real flavor bonus, blanch your fresh herbs by dipping them in boiling, salted water for 15 seconds and then in ice water. This maximizes the flavor.

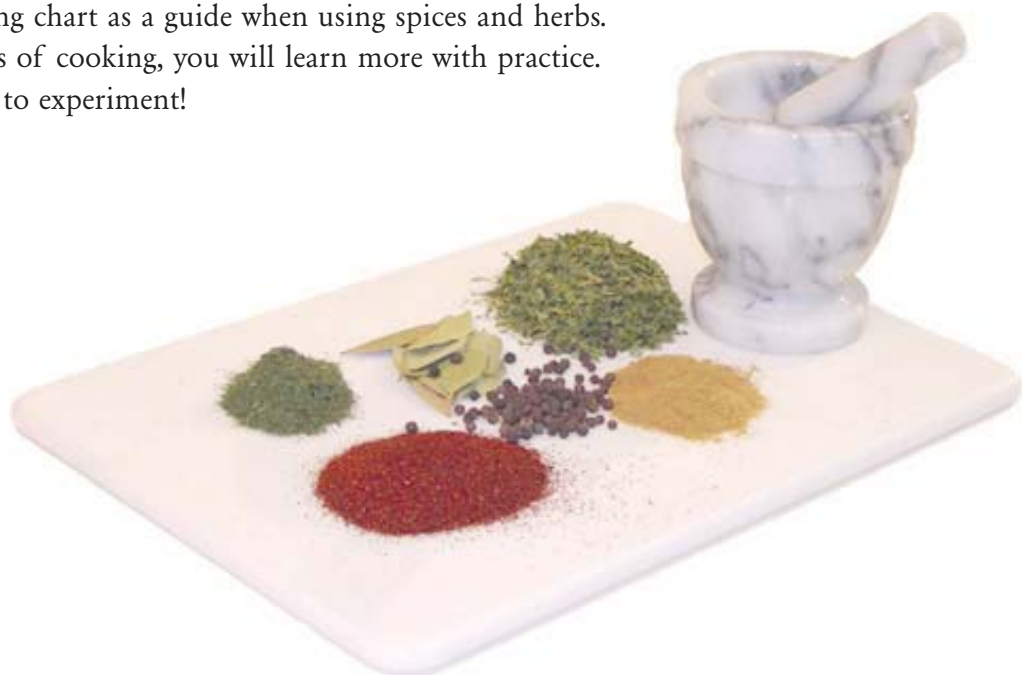
Drying Herbs

It can be a good idea to dry fresh herbs, because dried herbs keep longer than fresh ones. Dried herbs are best used in sauces, stews, and soups, because they become re-hydrated. You can dry herbs with either your microwave or oven. To dry in the microwave, spread the herbs in a single layer on a microwave safe plate and heat for 1 minute. To dry in the oven, spread the herbs on a baking sheet in a single layer and cook for 30 minutes at 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Store dried herbs in a tightly sealed container in a cool, dark cabinet.

Toasting Spices

To maximize the flavors of whole spices, toast them first by placing them in a small nonstick pan without oil. Cook over medium heat. Shake the pan continuously, until the spices are fragrant. Do not let them brown! Cool the spices before grinding them, because warm spices will turn to paste if ground.

Use the following chart as a guide when using spices and herbs. As with all areas of cooking, you will learn more with practice. Don't be afraid to experiment!



Herbs & Spices

Herb/Spice	Flavor	Goes well with...
Allspice	Sweet	Beef, onions, squash, carrots and breads
Basil	Licorice/cloves	Tomatoes, cheese, poultry, eggs, fish & vegetables
Bay Leaf	Piney	Stews, soups, rice and grains
Caraway	Tangy	Rye breads, cabbage and sauerkraut
Cardamom	Sweet	Baked goods
Cayenne	Hotter than black or white	Anywhere you use paprika
Chervil	Licorice, parsley substitute	Carrots, eggs, fish, and salads
Chives	Onion	Salads, vinaigrettes and creams
Cilantro (Coriander)	Pungent. Soapy to some	Salsa, guacamole, root licorice to others. vegetables, and beans
Cinnamon	Sweet or hot	Desserts, breads, fruit
Cloves	Licorice	Hams, soups, breads, beef
Cumin	Spicy. Pairs with chilies.	Bean soup, chicken, lamb, and sausage
Dill	Tangy	Pickles, fish, cream cheese, sour cream
Dried Chili	Hottest	Pizza, pasta, salads
Fennel (Anise)	Licorice	Salads, apples, seafood, sausage
Garlic	Pungent	Sauces, all meats, rice, pasta, and vegetables
Ginger	Pungent	Baking, marinades, tomatoes, onions, ham and soups
Mint	Spicy/sweet, menthol	Candy, lamb, peas and tea
Mustard	Hot	Salad dressing, sausage, sauces
Nutmeg	Sweet & pungent	Breads, custard, BBQ sauce, spinach, carrots, and eggnog
Oregano	Bitter	Tomatoes, fish, potatoes and squash
Paprika	Mild peppery	Eggs, goulash, rice and potatoes
Parsley	Peppery	Chicken, eggs, fish, pasta, potatoes, rice vegetables
Pepper	Hot	Meats, vegetables, rice, pasta

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Herbs & Spices

Herb/Spice	Flavor	Goes well with...
Poppy Seeds	Sweet	Salad dressing, fruit and muffins
Rosemary	Piney w/ lemon	Lamb, pork, beef, salmon, mushrooms and potatoes
Saffron	Medicinal	Risotto, paella, fish, rice and lamb
Sage	Musty mint	Pork, oily fish, stuffing and chicken
Savory	Cross between thyme & mint	Beans and chicken
Sesame	Mild	Breads, sushi, tuna, fish, noodles and eggplant
Tarragon	Licorice	Chicken, vegetables
Thyme	Pungent. Mint/lemon	All meat, goat cheese, figs, soups
Turmeric	Dye properties	Curry, chicken
Vanilla	Sweet	Flan, ice cream, milk drinks, fish, baked goods

Creating Seasoned Oils

Seasoned oils make great salad dressings, topping for baked fruit or cooking oil for stir-fry. Make them in small amounts and store in the refrigerator. Use neutral oils like canola, walnut, or extra virgin olive oil.

Fresh Herb Oils

Basil, parsley, mint, cilantro, thyme, rosemary, and oregano all make great seasoned oils, which will last one month in the refrigerator.

- Chop herbs coarsely and then blend in a blender or food processor.
- Add the same amount of oil as you have herbs and make it into a paste.
- Put the mixture into a jar and add an additional 1 cup of oil.
- Shake until mixed and refrigerate.

Spice Oils

Use mustard, chili, curry, cumin, cinnamon, or saffron to make these tasty oils. They will keep up to 6 months in the refrigerator.

- Make a paste using 1 Tbsp. of powdered spice to every 1 tsp. of water.
- Put the paste in a glass jar and add 1 cup of oil.
- Shake until mixed.
- Let sit on counter for one day and then filter oil through cheesecloth into a glass jar and refrigerate.

Root Oils

Roots like shallots, garlic, horseradish, or ginger can be used to make oil that will keep in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.

- Using a cheese grater, grate the root into a bowl.
- In a glass jar add 1 Tbsp. of root to 1 cup of oil.
- Shake until mixed and refrigerate.



Herbs & Spices

Creating Seasoned Vinegars

Seasoned oils can be used with seasoned vinegars for salad dressings or for adding flavor to cooked vegetables. Basil, caraway, cayenne, chives, coriander, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, horseradish, mint, rosemary, tarragon, and thyme all make good vinegars.

- Use mild vinegar like rice wine vinegar.
- Use ¼ cup herbs or spice to 1 cup of vinegar.
- Leave out on counter in jar and shake each day.
- It will take two weeks for the flavor to fully infuse into the vinegar.
- The vinegar will last for one year, in or out of the fridge.

Creating Seasoned Rubs

Seasoned rubs are great on meats and vegetables. However, the premixed seasonings found at the grocery store often contain up to 90% salt in order for the manufacturer to reduce production costs. You can make your own flavorful rubs with much less sodium and more flavor.

All Purpose Blend

1 part of each:

Basil
Bay Leaf (1 only)
Marjoram
Parsley
Sage
Thyme

Fish Blend

1 part each:

Basil
Dill Weed
Fennel Weed
Lavender
Lemon Balm
Rosemary

Meat Blend

1 part each:

Bay Leaf
Garlic Tops
Marjoram
Parsley
Rosemary
Thyme

Chicken Blend

1 part each:

Celery Tops
Chervil
Parsley
Sage

Bouquet Blend

Tie together for easy
removal later-

Bay leaf (1 only)
Marjoram (1 sprig)
Orange Rind (1 piece)
Parsley (1 sprig)
Thyme (1 small sprig)
Savory Thyme

Vegetable Blend

1 part each:

Celery
Chervil
Dill Weed
Fennel Leaves
Lemon Balm
Lovage
Paprika
Parsley
Tarragon

Herbs & Spices

Salt Substitute

1 part each:

Basil
Chervil
Lovage
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Savory
Thyme
Tarragon

Salad Blend

1 part each:

Basil
Celery Seeds
Chervil
Dill Weed
Lemon Balm
Marjoram
Parsley

Soup Blend

1/4 cup each:

Basil
Bay Leaf
Celery Tops
Marigold Petals
Oregano
Parsley
Sage
Savory
Thyme

Spaghetti Blend

1 part each:

Garlic Tops
Marjoram
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Sage
Savory

Herb Garden

Combine in a shaker:

2 tsp. dried Parsley Flakes
1/2 tsp. Garlic Powder
1/2 tsp. Basil
1/2 tsp. Marjoram
1/2 tsp. Allspice
1/4 tsp. Pepper

Zesty Italian

Combine in a shaker:

1/2 tsp. dried
Parsley Flakes
1/2 tsp. Oregano
1/2 tsp. Dried Mustard
1/2 tsp. Celery Seed
1/4 tsp. Pepper

Herbs & Spices

Creating Marinades

The basic ingredients of marinades are oil and vinegar. Marinades add flavor to meat and vegetables. It is best to marinate meats for about two hours.

- Coat the meat or vegetables in a zip-top plastic bag and then refrigerate.
- Use a combination of pre-spiced oils and vinegars or try the following recipe:
 - > 1¼ cup olive oil
 - > ¼ cup rosemary
 - > ¼ cup thyme
 - > ¼ cup parsley
 - > ¼ cup onion

Creating Teas

Teas are simple to make. However, certain herbs can be harmful. If the leaves smell bad, don't use them.

- Get a package of tea bags from a grocery store or oriental market.
- Put the dried herbs or spices in a tea bag and soak for 2 minutes.
- Traditional benefits of herbs in herbal teas.
 - > Catnip- Used for relaxation.
 - > Chamomile- Calms stomachaches, relieves anxiety.
 - > Anise- Used to treat insomnia.
 - > Cloves/saffron- Used as an aphrodisiac.
 - > Ginger- Used to increase energy.
 - > Cumin/fennel/coriander- Used for indigestion.
 - > Thyme/sage/ginger- Relieve cold & flu symptoms.
 - > Rosemary- Used to increase circulation.



Basic Tools for Healthy Cooking

Stocking your kitchen with tools and gadgets can either be amusing or confusing, depending on your cooking abilities. Here are the tools that every cook will want to have on hand.

The Essentials

- *Can/Bottle opener* – Whether hand-crank or electric, make sure to buy one that will stand up to repeated use. Wash and dry thoroughly after each use to prevent bacteria build-up.
- *Colander* – Buy a large metal or plastic strainer for draining pasta and rinsing fruits and vegetables.
- *Fire extinguisher & Pot holders* – Put safety first. Don't risk burning your hands or your house.
- *Grater* – A four-sided grater will give you many options for incorporating vegetables, cheese, or whole spices into your meals.
- *Instant-read digital thermometer* – An important item and small price to pay to make sure your meat is cooked properly. Look for one that includes a chart with proper cooking temperatures.
- *Mixing bowls* – Buy glass, stoneware or metal mixing bowls in two or three sizes.
- *Steamers* – A metal steamer placed on top of a pot of boiling water is a great way to cook fresh vegetables without losing the nutrients.
- *Timer* – Not all stove timers are accurate. Get a portable timer that you can carry with you while moving around the house.
- *Vegetable peeler* – Buy a peeler with a swivel head and comfortable handle. Use it for peeling potatoes, carrots or cucumbers.
- *Whisks* – Get one small and one medium-to-large, made of metal, nylon or plastic (for use in non-stick pans). Use for whipping up a last-minute omelet or blending ingredients for the perfect sauce.

Measuring Cups and Spoons

Accurate measurements are a must for the successful cook.

- One set of cups for dry ingredients in metal or plastic – including 1-cup, 1/2-cup, 3/4-cup, 1/3-cup measurements. If you can afford it, get two sets. You will save cleaning time as you cook.
- At least one glass measuring cup with spout, preferably one that can measure up to two cups and can handle hot liquids.
- A set of good quality measuring spoons made of metal or plastic and in various sizes: 1-Tablespoon, 1-teaspoon, 1/2-teaspoon, 1/4-teaspoon, 1/8-teaspoon.

Basic Tools for Healthy Cooking

Knives

Keeping your knives sharp keeps you safer because less pressure is required to cut through food. Below is a list of the knives you will want to have in your kitchen.

- > A chef's knife has a wide triangular-shaped blade and is used for cutting and chopping almost all foods. You may want to purchase eight-inch knife if you have small hands.
- > Paring knives are used for almost everything else – slicing, peeling, and trimming. Three to four inches is a good size blade.
- > Serrated (rough rippled edges) knives are generally used for cutting bread, as well as certain fruits or vegetables.
- > A boning knife is longer than a paring knife and has a sharp point for de-boning meat, poultry and fish.
- > A slicing or carving knife has a long blade (8-10 inches), sometimes curved, and is used for slicing cooked meat and poultry.
- Don't forget to get a knife sharpener – electric or a stone – to help keep your knives in good cutting condition.
- To keep knives sharp, do not cut on porcelain, glass or metal surfaces. Do not use knives as a substitute for any other kind of tool, such as a screwdriver or bottle opener.
- Rinse food products off knives immediately after use. Some foods, like mayonnaise, can damage the fine edge of the blade.
- Hand-wash knives in hot, soapy water and dry after each use.
- Never put a knife into soapy water and leave it unattended. Someone could cut his or her hand when reaching into the soapy water.
- If you are unsure about sharpening a knife, take it to a professional.

Cutting Boards

Cutting boards may hide harmful germs. How many depends on how porous the surface is, the type of plastic or wood, and direction of the wood fibers.

- Choose a board with a smooth, hard surface that is approved for contact with food.
- Replace cutting boards that become deeply scratched, carved or grooved.
- Do not chop salad, vegetables or other ready-to-eat foods on an unwashed cutting board that has been used to trim raw meat, poultry or seafood. Always use a clean, separate, cutting board for fresh vegetables, fruits, breads, and other food that will not be cooked prior to eating.

Basic Tools for Healthy Cooking

- Scrape off any food and scrub all cutting boards completely with hot soapy water after each use. Dishwashers are usually good cleaners for most cutting boards. However, the high temperatures in your dishwasher may damage thin plastic or wooden boards.
- Sanitize cutting boards from time-to-time with a mixture of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach to one quart of water. Over a sink, flood the board with the bleach mixture and let it stand a few minutes. Then, rinse completely with fresh water. Sanitize cutting boards after cutting raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Store cutting boards so that they stay clean, dry, and do not touch raw meat, poultry, seafood or their drippings.

Pots and Pans

Purchase heavier pots and pans made from cast aluminum, copper or stainless steel because they distribute heat evenly. You won't have to cook at high temperatures, so you will lower your chances of burning dinner! Pots with non-stick surfaces are easy to clean and can be used with little or no oil for healthy cooking. For baking pans, look for an "air bake" feature that helps prevent burning. Here's a list of the basics to have on hand:

- One 2 quart and one 4 quart sauce pan with tight-fitting lids.
- One 8 to 10-quart stockpot, for soups and pasta.
- One 8-inch ovenproof skillet and one 12 to 14-inch ovenproof skillet with lid.
- One large roasting pan with a rack for roasting meat.
- Broiler pan, for broiling meats, veggies or potatoes.
- Two cookie sheets - for pizza, cookies and more.
- One 13-inch by 9-inch oven-safe baking dish.
- One 9-inch by 9-inch ovenproof pie plate.
- One muffin pan - for muffins, condiments, making frozen treats and gelatin desserts.
- One eight or nine-inch square baking dish - for cakes, casseroles or meats.
- One loaf pan - for breads, meatloaf or small cakes.
- One or two covered microwave and freezer-safe casserole dishes in varied sizes for cooking vegetables, casseroles and leftovers.
- Two eight or nine-inch round baking pans for layer cakes.

Basic Tools for Healthy Cooking

Spoons and Spatulas

Choose utensils to match your cookware. You do not want to scrape and scratch a non-stick surface with metal spoons or spatulas. Hard plastic and wood are suitable alternatives. Soft rubber spatulas should not be used in hot pans because they can melt.

- Buy an assortment of spoons, including slotted spoons, wooden spoons, sturdy metal spoons (if appropriate) and ladles for soups and sauces.
- You will use your spatulas all the time. You will want one that is narrow and long, and one that is short and wide. (Make sure they have sturdy handles with solid grips.)
- Soft rubber spatulas are used for scraping bowls, your food processor or folding cake batter.

Storage containers

- Keep old margarine tubs, peanut butter jars and storage bags that seal tightly for leftovers and lunches.
- Keep a few larger sizes for the freezer.
- Use a vacuum-packer that will keep your leftovers fresh in the freezer. If you shop in large quantities, vacuum-sealed bags will help keep your purchases fresh for longer periods.

Crock cookers, food processors and other small appliances will cut your time in the kitchen significantly.

- Food processors chop, grind, mix and knead in less than half the time it takes you to do it by hand.
- A blender can be the salad-lover's best friend. Use yours to whip up dressings, sauces and fruit smoothies.
- Mixers – If you bake often, invest in a heavy-duty stand mixer. If you just want to mash potatoes or bake the occasional cake, a smaller electric hand mixer will do fine.
- Crock cookers – Prepare your ingredients the night before. Throw them in the pot in the morning and come home to the aroma and flavor of a slow-cooked meal. Place the pot in a safe place – like your stovetop – to avoid burning your counter-top.
- A commercial rice steamer makes it easy to cook rice correctly and makes cleanup easy.

Extras

You don't need these items to be a healthy cook, but they will save you time and effort in the kitchen.

- *Salad spinner* – The easiest way to clean your lettuce or spinach. Removes sand and dirt and spins the leaves dry.

Basic Tools for Healthy Cooking

- *Pepper mill* – Freshly ground pepper is always welcome on salads, soups, meats and vegetables.
- *Kitchen shears* – These make chopping meats, lettuce and herbs a breeze!
- *Tongs* – One medium-to-large metal set for meats and hot items, one medium-to-small plastic set for fruits, vegetables and salads.
- *Corkscrew* – Wine makes a great glaze for fish, chicken and vegetables. The alcohol is removed as it cooks, leaving a sweet and delicious glaze behind.
- *Bulb baster* – For basting meat and removing fat.
- *Meat fork* – Buy one with a long handle, which comes in handy for the BBQ or oven.
- *Knife Block or Tray* – Store your knives properly to prevent cuts and to keep the blades sharp.
- *Cookbook/Recipe holder* – Get your recipes off the counter and up where you can see it. This will save space if your work area is small.
- *Rolling Pin* – For rolling biscuits, cookie dough or pie crust.
- *Scale* – This will help you make accurate measurements. A kitchen scale can also help you learn proper *portion sizes*.



Healthy cooking doesn't mean that you have to become a gourmet chef or buy expensive cookware. Simply use basic cooking methods to prepare foods in healthy ways.

These cooking methods offer ways to capture the flavor and nutrients from your food without adding excessive amounts of fat or salt. Once you've mastered these techniques, use them often to prepare your favorite dishes.

Baking

Besides breads and desserts, use this method to cook evenly-sized pieces of vegetables, fruit, seafood, and poultry or lean meat. Place food in a pan or dish where the hot, dry air of your oven surrounds it. The food may be covered or uncovered. Baking generally doesn't require that you add fat to the food.

Braising

This method involves browning the ingredient first in an open or covered pan on top of the stove and then slowly cooking it with a small quantity of liquid. In some recipes, the cooking liquid is used afterward to form flavorful, nutrient-rich gravy.

Blanching

Precook food for a short amount of time in boiling water for less than one minute and then place it immediately in an ice water bath. This helps to loosen the skin on foods like tomatoes.

Grilling and broiling

Both of these cooking methods expose food to direct heat. To grill outdoors, place the food on a grill rack above a bed of charcoal briquettes or gas-heated rocks. When grilling smaller items, use a long-handled grill basket, which prevents pieces from slipping through the rack. To broil indoors, place food on a broiler rack below the heat element in your oven. Both methods allow fat to drip away from the food.

Marinating

Marinating adds flavor and tenderness to foods. Cover the food item completely with a marinade for a few hours. You can make your own marinade from a recipe or buy ones already made. If the food needs to be refrigerated, the marinating time can take place when the food is in the refrigerator.

Cooking Methods

Poaching

To poach foods, gently simmer ingredients in water or a flavorful liquid such as broth, vinegar or juice until cooked through and tender. For stovetop poaching, choose a covered pan that best fits the size and shape of the food so that you use a minimum amount of liquid. You can also poach foods in foil packets in the oven or on the grill.

Roasting

Like baking, but at higher temperatures, roasting uses an oven's dry heat to cook the food. You can roast foods on a baking sheet or in a roasting pan. For poultry, seafood and meat, place a rack inside the roasting pan so that the fat in the ingredients will drip away during cooking.

Sautéing

This method quickly cooks small or thin pieces of food quickly. If you choose a high-quality nonstick pan, you can cook food without using fat. Depending on the recipe, use broth, nonstick cooking spray or water in place of oil.

Steaming

One of the simplest cooking techniques to master is steaming food in a perforated basket suspended above simmering liquid. Add a flavorful liquid or seasonings to the water to flavor the food as it cooks.

Stir-frying

A traditional Asian method, stir-frying quickly cooks small, evenly-sized pieces of food while they are rapidly stirred in a wok or large nonstick frying pan. You need only a small amount of oil or nonstick cooking spray.

There is nothing particularly difficult, unusual or complicated about healthy cooking techniques. In fact, novice cooks and seasoned chefs all use the basic methods. Try a few recipes, decide which methods you like best and use them often to prepare healthier meals and menus.



These days, the Internet is a cook's best friend. From recipes to cooking classes, you will find the answers to most of your nutrition questions and concerns. Here are a few of our favorite sites—all guaranteed to lead you to a healthy eating adventure!

Healthy Substitutions

www.diabetes.org.uk/eatwell/adapting

<http://mardiweb.com/lowfat/cooktip.htm>

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/h_eating/tips.htm

www.ivillage.com/food/experts/cookcoach/qas/0,,165850_88885,00.html

www.nutritiondata.com/facts

Healthy Snacks

www.mosescone.com/bodypat.cfm?id=594

<http://my.webmd.com/content/article/58/66578.htm>

www.ci.tucson.az.us

www.sparkpeople.com

Mealtime Fun

www.mealtime.org

http://my.webmd.com/content/chat_transcripts/1/105052.htm

<http://my.webmd.com/content/article/91/101350.htm>

www.eatright.org/Public/NutritionInformation/92_nfs0900.cfm

http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/habits.html

www.fathers.com/articles/articles.asp?id=638&cat=49

Entertaining the Healthy Way

www.arthritis.org “Entertaining with Ease”

<http://geoparent.com> “Planning a Party: Step by Step”

www.creatinghomestyle.com “Basic Table Setting”

www.diy.net “Wine, Flowers and Beyond-Entertaining Tips: Setting the Table”

www.applesforhealth.com

More Help

Stocking Your Cupboards

www.ochef.com/231.htm

Basic Tools for Healthy Cooking

www.azcentral.com/home/food/cooking101/lesson3.html

www.extension.umn.edu/info-u/nutrition/BJ778.html

www.ehow.com/how_13912_select-cooking-utensils.html

<http://busycooks.about.com/library/lessons/blkitchendrawer.htm>

Healthy Cooking Methods

www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=NU00201

Find more tips on

Eating Healthy at

www.checkyourhealth.org

The screenshot shows the 'Check Your Health' website. The header includes 'utah.gov', 'State Online Services', 'Agency List', 'Business.utah.gov', and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for 'NEWS', 'HEALTH DATA', 'SERVICES AREA', 'CONTACT UDOH', 'ABOUT UDOH', and 'ORGANIZATION'. The main content area features a large red checkmark and the text 'CHECK YOUR HEALTH'. To the right is a photo of a woman and the text 'Eat Healthy, Get Active' with the phone number '1-888-222-2542'. Below this is a sidebar with a navigation menu: Home, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Materials, Screenings, Newsletters, Health Links, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Tips for Eating Smart and Watching Calories' and includes a section for 'Ask Questions' with a list of tips and a photo of a waiter serving a table. Below that is a section for 'Entrées and Side Dishes' with a list of tips.

Ask Questions

- Ask about preparation methods
- Ask if sauces or gravies are served on the side
- Ask how large portions are
- Ask if baked and broiled items are basted while they cook
- Ask if vegetables are cooked in butter or margarine
- Ask about substituting a high-fat, high-calorie item with something that is lower in fat and calories

Entrées and Side Dishes

- When ordering grilled fish or vegetables, ask that the food either be grilled without butter or oil, or prepared "light," with little oil or butter.
- When ordering pasta dishes, look for tomato-based sauces rather than cream-based sauces. Tomato-based sauces are much lower in fat and calories. In addition, the tomato sauce (or marinara sauce) can count as a vegetable!
- Ask for salsa with a baked potato instead of sour cream, butter, cheese, or bacon. Salsa is very low in calories and a healthy alternative with a lot of spice.
- Order sandwiches with mustard rather than mayonnaise or "special sauce." Mustard adds flavor with virtually no calories.
- Look for items on the menu that are baked, grilled, dry-sautéed, broiled, poached, or steamed. These cooking techniques use less fat in the food preparation and are generally lower in calories.
- Don't be afraid to ask for special low-calorie or low-fat preparation of a menu item. The restaurant industry is one of hospitality and customer choice.
- Choose entrees with fruits and vegetables as key ingredients. Fruits and vegetables are a good source of dietary fiber as well as of many vitamins and minerals.
- Enjoy foods that are flavored with fresh herbs rather than fats such as oil and butter. Herbs add a unique flavor to any dish!
- Choose foods made with whole grains. Examples include whole-wheat bread and dishes made with brown rice.
- Order steamed vegetables as a side dish.
- If you have a choice of side dishes, opt for baked potato or steamed vegetables rather than french fries. Even if choices are not listed, ask your server to substitute vegetables or a baked potato for french fries.

Introduction

Original material supplied by LaDene Larsen, RN, BSN - Director, Bureau of Health Promotion, Utah Department of Health

Menu Planning

Original material supplied by Rachel Cox, RD; Maria Givler, RD; Kelly Miller, RD, CDE, Utah Department of Health, and Jennifer Thornock MPH, RD, CD, CDE, Intermountain Health Care.

Healthy Substitutions

Original material supplied by Sarah Tronrud, MS, RD, CD, Utah Department of Health
www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?objectid=C301BB78-4C79-4CE7-812797F2B14D1416
www.calorieking.com

Healthy Snacks

Original material supplied by Kelly Miller, RD, CDE, Utah Department of Health.
www.mosescone.com/bodypat.cfm?id=594
<http://my.webmd.com/content/article/58/66578.htm>
www.ci.tucson.az.us
www.sparkpeople.com

Stocking Your Cupboards

Original material supplied by Marie Nagata, Check Your Health Program Manager, Utah Department of Health

Mealtime Fun

Original material supplied by Jane Sims, Check Your Health Project Coordinator, Utah Department of Health and KUTV2, and Lowe Rudd.
www.mealtime.org
<http://my.webmd.com/content/article/91/101350.htm>
www.eatright.org/Public/NutritionInformation/92_nfs0900.cfm
http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/habits.html

Citations

Entertaining the Healthy Way

Original material supplied by Janet L. Heins, RD, MPH and Maria Givler, RD, CD, Utah Department of Health

Table Manners That Matter, by Margie P. Memmott, Utah State University Extension.

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Herbs & Spices

Original material supplied by Intermountain Health Care, Jennifer Thornock MPH, RD, CD, CDE.

Pots, Pans & Utensils

Original material supplied by Check Your Health Project Coordinator Jane Sims, Utah Department of Health and KUTV2.

www.azcentral.com/home/food/cooking101/lesson3.html

www.extension.umn.edu/info-u/nutrition/BJ778.html

busycooks.about.com/library/lessons/blkitchendrawer.htm

Cooking Methods

Original material supplied by consultant Janet L. Heins, RD, MPH; Utah Department of Health.

www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=NU00201

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Where's Mom Now that I Need Her? Frandsen, Betty Rae; Frandsen, Kathryn J. and Frandsen, Kent P. Aspen West Publishing Company, 1985.

www.perfectentertaining.com



www.checkyourhealth.org