

Meeting Well

Ingredient Substitutions: Make the switch for healthier recipes

Cook up healthier recipes by swapping one ingredient for another. Here are some helpful tips that can help modify your favorite family recipes to be more in line with your healthy-eating plan. It's not as hard as you may think.

Fat and cholesterol	
If your recipe calls for:	Try substituting:
Bacon	Canadian bacon, turkey bacon, smoked turkey or lean prosciutto (Italian ham)
Butter, margarine, shortening or oil in baked goods	Applesauce or prune puree for half of the butter, shortening or oil called for in a recipe
Butter, margarine, shortening or oil to prevent sticking	Cooking spray or nonstick pans
Creamed soups	Fat-free milk-based soups, or use mashed potato flakes, pureed carrots, potatoes or tofu as thickening agents
Eggs	Two egg whites or 1/4 cup egg substitute for each whole egg
Evaporated milk	Evaporated skim milk
Full-fat cream cheese	Fat-free or low-fat cream cheese, Neufchatel or low-fat cottage cheese pureed until smooth
Full-fat sour cream	Fat-free plain yogurt, or fat-free or low-fat sour cream
Ground beef	Extra-lean or lean ground beef, chicken or turkey
Mayonnaise	Reduced-calorie mayonnaise-based salad dressing or reduced-fat mayonnaise
Oil-based marinades	Wine, balsamic vinegar, fruit juice or fat-free broth
Salad dressing	Fat-free or reduced-calorie dressing or flavored vinegars
Whole milk	Reduced-fat or fat-free milk

Sugar	
If your recipe calls for:	Try substituting:
Fruit canned in heavy syrup	Fruit canned in its own juice or in water, or fresh fruit
Fruit-flavored yogurt	Plain yogurt with fresh fruit slices
Syrup	Pureed fruit, applesauce, or low-calorie, sugar-free syrup
Sugar, white	1 tsp mashed banana can substitute for one tablespoon of sugar

Sodium

If your recipe calls for:	Try substituting:
Season salt, garlic salt, celery salt or onion salt	Herb-only seasonings, garlic powder, celery seed or onion flakes, or use finely chopped garlic, celery or onions
Soups, sauces, dressings, crackers, or canned meat, fish or vegetables	Low-sodium or reduced-sodium versions
Soy sauce	Sweet-and-sour sauce, hot mustard sauce or low-sodium soy sauce
Table salt	Herbs, spices, or salt-free seasoning mixes or herb blends

Other ingredients

If your recipe calls for:	Try substituting:
All-purpose (plain) flour	Whole-wheat flour for half of the called for all-purpose flour
Dry bread crumbs	Rolled oats or crushed bran cereal
Enriched pasta	Whole-wheat pasta
Iceberg lettuce	Arugula, chicory, collard greens, dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens, spinach or watercress
Meat as the main ingredient	Use 1/3 meat and the rest vegetables on pizzas or in casseroles, soups and stews
White bread	Whole-wheat bread
White rice	Brown rice, wild rice, bulgur or pearl barley
Cheese, regular	Low-fat or non-fat cheese
Chocolate chips	Dried fruit
Coconut, 1 cup shredded	1/2 cup toasted shredded coconut + 1/2 tsp coconut extract
Gravy	Omit or thin with water to au jus consistency
Nuts, 1 cup chopped	1/2 cup nuts, toasted to bring out the flavor
Oatmeal, flavored packets	Natural oats with chopped fruit or sugar-free jam
Traditional pie crust	Graham cracker crust