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EASY FOOD SWAPS TO HEALTHY-UP YOUR DIET

Did you know you can eat plenty of food to fill you up, while cutting out some of the not-so-healthy stuff? It's true. You can enjoy some of your favorite, most decadent recipes simply by doing some creative ingredient swapping.

Don't just think about the number of calories in a food. There's more to it than that. You get full from the amount you eat, not by how many calories you eat. It's about replacing higher calorie foods with lower-calorie options or with foods higher in fiber that will fill you up. Some of these include fruits and vegetables, low-fat and fat-free dairy, and beans and peas.

Try "bulking up" some of your favorite foods with vegetables—for instance stack lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumber on your sandwich. Or make one of everyone's favorite comfort foods, macaroni and cheese, with low-fat milk and cheese, whole-grain pasta, and chopped tomatoes and spinach (see recipe). Your one-cup serving will be much lower in calories, and the whole-grain pasta and veggies will fill you up faster.

Here are some other food substitutions to try:

QUICK TAKES

COMFORTING THOUGHTS: HEALTHIER TAKES ON YOUR FAVORITE FOODS

For most of us, given the choice between a helping of creamy, cheesy, noodle-y casserole, and a plate of raw greens with a splash of lemon juice — we'd go for the casserole hands-down. We know the greens are packed with nutrition and low in calories, but on a cool late-fall day, there's something about comfort food that makes the change of season easier to handle.

So how do we choose? How can we keep up with a healthy diet and still satisfy cravings? It's not as hard as you might think.

It's all about making modifications to recipes and cooking methods. There are lots of ways to prepare foods that are as healthy as they are delicious. For instance, by grilling or broiling instead of pan-frying in butter or oil, you'll end up with a much lower-fat and lower-calorie end result. If you miss the flavor that butter or oil gives to the food, jazz it up with herbs, spices, lemon juice or flavored vinegars. Use all of those flavorings to replace all or some added salt, too. You likely won't miss the extra sodium.

INSTEAD OF...	TRY THIS
Cream soups	Broth-based soup with lots of veggies
Chips, pretzels, or other salty snacks	Hummus with baby carrots for dipping
Whole milk	Fat-free, low-fat, or reduced-fat milk
Ice cream	Sorbets or Sherberts
Regular salad dressings	Reduced-calorie dressings, lemon juice, or herb-flavored wine vinegar
Rice or pasta	Cauliflower rice or zucchini spirals
Fettuccini Alfredo	Whole-grain pasta with marinara sauce
Granola	Oatmeal
Stir-fry with white rice	Stir-fry with brown rice
Bacon and sausage	Lean ham or Canadian bacon
Sugary soda	Plain or sparkling water; unsweetened ice tea

There are literally hundreds of other changes you can make to your diet. Health- and weight-oriented recipe websites and some cookbooks can help you find ways to lighten up recipes without sacrificing flavor. You might be surprised just how easy it can be—with delicious, filling results you can feel good about.

Sources:

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. *Lower-calorie, lower-fat alternative foods.*

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/eat/shop_lcal_fat.htm (Accessed 8/20/18)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Eat more, weigh less?*

https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/Energy_Density.pdf (Accessed 8/20/18)

BETTER-FOR-YOU MACARONI & CHEESE

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

Who doesn't love mac 'n' cheese? This lower-fat version lets you enjoy all the goodness with less fat, more fiber, and added veggies.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups whole-grain macaroni
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup fat-free evaporated milk
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper or to taste
- 1 cup shredded low-fat sharp cheddar cheese
- ½ cup low-fat cream cheese
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves
- 2 cups chopped fresh tomatoes
- Paprika
- Cooking spray

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook macaroni according to package directions. Don't add salt to the water. Drain well and set aside.
2. Spray a baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F.
4. Lightly spray a saucepan or skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Add onion and sauté for about 3 minutes over medium heat, being careful not to let the onion brown.
5. In a bowl, combine macaroni, onion, and remaining ingredients, and mix thoroughly.
6. Transfer mixture into baking dish. Sprinkle paprika over the top.
7. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Let stand for 5-10 minutes before serving.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

195 Calories
 10 g Protein
 6 g Fat
 3 g Saturated fat
 21 g Carbohydrate
 17 g Cholesterol
 3 g Fiber
 358 mg Sodium