

Some basic tips for making your favorite recipes healthier include:

- Decrease the meat and increase the vegetables called for in stews and casseroles.
- Choose whole-grain versions of pasta, rice, and bread
- When baking substitute whole-wheat flour for bleached white flour. The results will be heavier so at first try substituting one cup of white flour with whole-wheat and then increase the amount slowly as your taste adjusts.
- Serve imaginative whole-grain side dishes like quinoa, bulgur, barley or kasha instead of white rice or pasta.
- Cook with less fat by using non-stick skillets or cooking sprays
- Try oven fries instead of fried French fries (mix cut up potatoes with a few tbs. of vegetable oil on a cookie sheet and bake at 400 degrees until done). Add rosemary instead of salt for flavor.
- Instead of frying meats, try roasting, grilling or baking.
- Avoid cooking with products that contain monosodium glutamate (MSG).
- Reduce salt and use real herbs and spices to add flavor, sauté garlic and sage leaves in little oil to flavor vegetables, meats or potatoes. Rub a mixture of fresh lemon juice, oil, herbs (rosemary, sage, thyme), and garlic on chicken and bake.
- If you must use garlic salt or onion salt, substitute garlic or onion powder instead, or better yet use the fresh stuff. Use unsalted or low-salt vegetable broths and products.
- Buy reduced-fat cheese or use mozzarella which is naturally lower in fat.
- In recipes calling for milk or cream, substitute 2% or reduced fat versions. This also works well for low-fat cream cheese, yogurt, and mayo.
- Unhealthy fats like certain oils, butter, or margarines can usually be cut by 1/3 to 1/2 in recipes. At first try a small cut-back and then use less and less over time; you'll hardly notice the difference. You can also use fat substitutes like prune purees and applesauce in baked goods.
- Use frozen fruit without added sugar if fresh is unavailable.
- You can cut the sugar called for in most recipes by one-third to one-half without even noticing a difference in taste.
- Sweeten waffles, pancake, and quick breads recipes with cinnamon, cardamom, vanilla or almond extracts in order to cut the sugar content.
- Try salsa on a baked potato or salad rather than high-fat dressing or butter. Use moister varieties of potatoes such as russet, Yukon gold, and red.
- Try substituting beans, peas, or tofu in some of your recipes instead of meat. Rinse cans of chickpeas or red kidney beans, or use marinated cubed tofu to add to your salad or stir-fry instead of chicken or steak.
- If a recipe calls for two eggs try substituting one egg and one egg white instead.
- Put the flavor where your mouth is. When baking, reduce the amount of nuts, dried fruits, baking chips, or sugar in your recipe and instead sprinkle them on top. When you take a bite you'll get the same sweet flavor with less ingredients.