

Patient Information

Top Tips for Adapting Recipes

Although some recipes are always going to be higher in fat and sugar than others, many recipes can be adapted to make them healthier.

Try the following suggestions next time you're preparing a meal:

- Choose lean cuts of meat, trim away any visible fat and take the skin off poultry.
- When making stews or casseroles skim off any fat that comes to the surface.
- Cook minced meat e.g. minced lamb or beef on its own first. Drain off the fat before adding any other ingredients. Try to choose low fat or lean varieties of mince.
- Use less meat, chicken or fish than recommended in the recipe, instead add more vegetables or pulses.
- If making a pie use mashed potato on top instead of pastry or if using pastry just put it on the top rather than on both the top and the bottom.
- Bake, steam, grill or microwave instead of frying. If you do fry use a non-stick pan and the minimum amount of oil. Alternatively use a silicone sheet which requires no oil.
- Always measure oil using a teaspoon rather than pouring from the bottle, or alternatively use a spray oil.
- Cut back on chips and roast potatoes but if you do have them, cut them thick. Low fat oven chips are a good alternative.
- Swap full cream milk for skimmed or semi-skimmed milk in sauces.
- Swap cream for low fat natural yoghurt or low fat fromage frais.
- Use a strong flavoured cheese and reduce the amount added to dishes such as macaroni cheese or pizza. Alternatively try using a reduced or half fat cheese.
- Swap creamy or satay sauces for tomato based sauces e.g. tomato and basil.
- Use only small amounts of oil in salad dressings, instead use low fat yoghurt, lemon/lime juice, tomato juice, vinegar, herbs, spices etc. Alternatively use reduced fat ready-made varieties.
- Don't forget to super-size your vegetables and salad when serving up the meal.
- Reduce the amount of salt that you use. Spice things up instead with herbs, chilli, spices, garlic, mustard or pepper.

Recipes for puddings, cakes and biscuits can also be adapted to make them healthier. Try the following suggestions:

- Use spread in place of butter or margarine.
- Swap white flour for wholemeal flour or use a mix of 50:50.
- Low fat natural yoghurt or fromage frais can be used in place of cream, evaporated milk or condensed milk.
- Make milk puddings with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk in place of full fat milk or cream.
- Use half the usual amount of sugar that a recipe recommends. Most recipes will work with as little as 1-2oz (25g – 50g) of sugar. Alternatively add extra sweetness with fruit e.g. dried fruit in scones, apple/banana in cake.
- Swap full fat cream cheese for lower fat varieties in recipes such as cheesecake.
- Use reduced sugar jams or pure fruit spreads in place of ordinary jams.

Remember, if you are adapting recipes to make them healthier, you still need to moderate the amount of cakes, biscuits and puddings you include.