

STAYFIT®

MAGAZINE

November 2010 ₹40

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CREATIVE COOKING FOR HEALTHY EATING!



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Most of us regularly indulge in foods that are not nutritious. Pizza, burgers, samosa, vada pav, mithai, ladoos etc. An occasional indulgence is fine but eating them often is harmful for health. The reason behind writing this article is to make cooking enjoyable and nutritious. Eating a variety of healthy foods is the key to a well-balanced diet and good nutrition. It helps prevent diseases such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Cooking nutritious food is easy. In many cases, your favorite recipes can be modified to make them healthier. Keep the points given below in mind to make your cooking nutritious and tasty!



Keep fats to a minimum

It's a good idea to minimize 'hidden fats' by choosing lean meats and skimmed dairy products. Processed foods have a lot of hidden fats. Dietary fats are best when they come from unrefined natural sources such as nuts, seeds, fish, soy, olives and avocados. Fat from these foods is rich in essential long-chain fatty acids. Following are some tips to reduce the intake of excessive fats in your diet.

1. Use a Non-stick cookware to reduce the need for cooking oil.
2. When a recipe calls for cream, use low fat yoghurt, low fat soy milk or skimmed milk.
3. Use low fat milk or curd instead of water or oil to knead the atta for making thinner and softer rotis.
4. When serving meat and fish, use pesto, salsa, chutneys and vinegars in place of sour creams, butter and creamy sauces.
5. Remove chicken skin which is high in fat.
6. Whether cooking or making dressings, use the oils that are lowest in saturated fats, *trans* fats and cholesterol – such as canola oil, corn oil, olive oil, sesame oil, soybean oil and sunflower oil – but use them sparingly because they contain 100 calories per tablespoon.
7. Stay away from coconut oil, palm oil and palm kernel oil. Even though they are vegetable oils and have no cholesterol, they are high in saturated fats.

Retaining the nutrients

Water soluble vitamins are delicate and easily destroyed during preparation and cooking. Suggestions include:

1. Scrub vegetables rather than peel them, as many nutrients are found close to the skin.
2. Steam, bake, grill or microwave the vegetables instead of boiling them. If you like to boil vegetables, use a small amount of water and do not overboil them.
3. Include more stir-fry recipes in your diet. Stir-fried vegetables are cooked quickly and they retain their crunch and associated nutrients.
4. Vegetables such as tindli, parvar, French beans, peas, potatoes, brinjal can be cooked in the pressure cooker with 1 tsp oil.



Cutting out salt

Salt is a traditional flavor enhancer, but research suggests that a high salt diet could contribute to a range of health problems including high blood pressure.

1. Add a splash of vinegar or lemon juice close to the end of cooking time or to cooked vegetables – it can enhance flavors in the same way as salt. Vinegar is great on green vegetables and lemon juice works well on fruits.
2. Choose fresh or frozen vegetables, since canned and pickled vegetables tend to be packaged with salt.
3. Reduce your use of soy sauce, tomato sauce and processed sauces and condiments (for example mayonnaise and salad dressings) because they contain high levels of salt.



Herbs

Culinary herbs are leafy plants that add flavor and colour to all types of meals. They are also rich in health-protective phyto-estrogens (plant compounds that have some similar effects to the female hormone, estrogen). In many cases, herbs can replace the flavor of salt and oil.

1. Herbs are delicately flavored, so add them to your cooking in the last few minutes.
2. Dried herbs are more strongly flavored than fresh. As a general rule, one teaspoon of dried herbs equals four teaspoons of fresh.
3. Use dry mustard for a zesty flavor when you're cooking or mix it with water to make a very sharp condiment.
4. Apart from boosting meat dishes, herbs can be added to soups, breads, salad, desserts and drinks.
5. Herbs such as coriander, ginger, garlic, chilly and lemongrass are especially complimentary in vegetable-based recipes.

Kitchen Tips

1. Add sugar to the water when boiling green peas, French beans or green gram instead of soda to retain the green colour and decrease intake of sodium.
2. To prevent lady finger vegetable from becoming sticky add 2 tsp of curd while cooking. This in turn will require less oil for cooking the vegetable.
3. Add 2 tsp of low fat milk when cooking cauliflower vegetable to ensure that the florets remain white in colour.
4. To improve the consistency of idli batter, add a little roasted rava, the idli will turn out softer and tastier.

Recipes

Here are some healthy recipes to tinkle your taste buds

Low fat Paneer – Serves 1

Ingredients

2 cups of low fat milk/ cow's milk/ skimmed milk
1 cup of low fat curd.

Method

Put the milk to boil in a broad pan. When it starts boiling, add the curd and mix well. Remove from the heat and stir gently until the milk curdles. Note if the milk has not curdled completely at this stage, allow the milk to boil once more. Strain and tie the curdled milk in a muslin cloth. Hang for about half an hour to allow the whey to drain out. Add whey while kneading the roti.



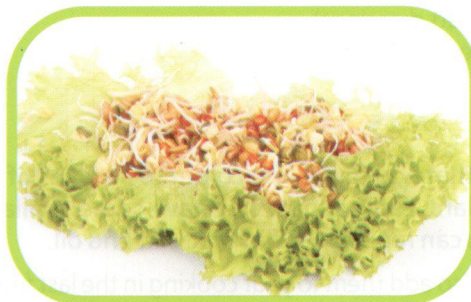
Dalia Sprout Salad – Serves 1

Ingredients

1 cup Dalia- broken wheat
½ cup of cooked sprouts
½ cup chopped tomato
½ cup of capsicum
¼ cup of spring onion
½ cup pomegranate
¼ cup of cucumber
Finely chopped Ginger, coriander,
lemon, chat masala and salt as per taste

Method

Soak the Dalia in water till it gets covered for 10 minutes. Add cooked sprouts, tomato, capsicum, cucumber, pomogranate, spring onion, ginger, salt and chat masala and serve.



Mix atta roti – Serves 1

Ingredients

1 Tbsp wheat flour
1 Tbsp jowar flour
1 Tbsp of bajra flour
1 TBsp of Nachni flour
4-5 cloves of garlic
1 -2 Tbsp of skimmed milk or curd
Ginger green chilly paste as per taste.
Salt as per taste.

Method

Mix all the above ingredients and knead into dough and cook soft tasty roti.

