Dietary Adjustments

Small adjustments in the food you eat could impact your health in a large way. For instance, consuming less sodium in one’s diet, in addition to regular exercise, has helped some people discontinue their high blood pressure medicine. Below you will find example recipes that are low in fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, or sodium. Also, there are some vegan and vegetarian friendly options as well.

Low in Fat

Although dietary fat is essential in your diet, the quantity to aim for is key. A diet should typically range from 20-35% total calories from fat. It is also important to include healthy fats from fish, nuts, olive oils (and other unsaturated oils) in your diet. See the recipe below for a low-fat quesadilla.

Spinach/Red Pepper Quesadillas (makes 8 quesadillas)

1. In a small bowl, mix the cream cheese and garlic powder.
2. Spread about 2 tablespoons of the cheese mixture on each tortilla.
3. Sprinkle about 2 tablespoons bell pepper and 2 tablespoons cheese on one half of each tortilla.
4. Add spinach: 1/4 cup if using fresh leaves OR 2 Tablespoons if using frozen. Fold tortillas in half.
5. Heat a large skillet over medium heat until hot. Put 2 folded tortillas in skillet and heat for 1-2 minutes on each side or until golden brown.
6. Remove quesadillas from skillet, place on platter and cover with foil to keep warm while cooking the remainder. Cut each quesadilla into 4 wedges. Serve warm.

(160 calories, 30 calories fat; from Iowa State University Extension)

Ingredients

- 8 oz fat-free cream cheese
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 8 small flour tortillas
- 1 cup chopped red pepper
- 1 cup low-fat cheese (shredded)
- 2 cups spinach (or 9oz frozen)
Low in Saturated Fat

Hydrogenated oils, processed meats, animal fat, butter and cheese are high in saturated fat. Saturated fats have been implicated in heart disease, stroke and cancer. It’s best to limit intake of saturated fat to less than 7% of total calories from fat.

**Tuna/Apple Sandwiches (3 Servings)**

1. Wash and peel the apple. Chop it into small pieces.
2. Drain the water from the can of tuna.
3. Put the tuna, apple, yogurt, mustard, and honey in a medium bowl. Stir well.
4. Spread 1/2 cup of the tuna mix onto each 3 slices of bread.
5. Top each sandwich with a washed lettuce leaf and a slice of bread (extra apple slices optional).

(250 calories, 0.5g saturated fat—Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program)

Low in Carbohydrate

A low carbohydrate diet has possible health benefits related to diabetes and heart disease; it limits the amounts of grains, starchy vegetables and starchy fruits that might be over abundance in ones’ diet.

**Bunless Burgers (4 servings)**

Form the ground beef into 4 patties and add salt and pepper. Pan grill the burger until cooked through (use cooking spray so it doesn’t stick). Serve the burger on the lettuce instead of a bun, top with onion, tomato, ketchup and mustard.

(240 calories, 9.6 g carbs)
A low sodium diet under 1500mg of sodium a day may be beneficial for those with cardiovascular risks, heart failure and hypertension. Be wary of processed foods, even sweet foods may have added sodium.

**Low in Sodium**

In January, Northside Community Center switched to a Go, Slow, & Whoa pantry (which is a color-coded rating system that categorizes foods based on nutrient density, calories, fats, sodium, etc.). The coordinators at Northside are hopeful that the labeling system will help promote healthier eating habits among their clients. In the picture below, we see canned chicken in water labeled as a “Go” item.

### Ingredients

- 4 (4oz) tilapia fillets
- Small pinch salt and pepper
- ½ cup flour
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 lemon
- 1 Tbsp melted butter

### Pan-seared tilapia (4 servings)

Rinse tilapia fillets in cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Season both sides of each fillet with salt and pepper. Place the flour in a shallow dish; gently press each fillet into the flour to coat and shake off the excess flour.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat; cook the tilapia in the hot oil until the fish flakes easily with a fork, about 4 minutes per side. Brush the melted butter onto the tilapia in the last minute before removing from the skillet. Serve immediately.

(249 calories, 148 mg sodium (6%) allrecipes.com)

### Spices & Herbs

Having spices and herbs on hand can really help keep sodium intake down, and will give your dishes added flavors and nutritional benefits. Herbs and spices to stock in your pantry include cinnamon, red pepper flakes, cumin, oregano, ginger, basil, thyme. Or try a spice blend like Mrs. Dash.
Vegetarian Recipe

Benefits from a vegetarian diet include lower levels of saturated fats, cholesterol and animal protein. Also, in a vegetarian diet there may be a higher intake of complex carbohydrates, fiber and vitamins and minerals. (www.heart.org)

Greek Salad (6 servings)
6 romaine lettuce leaves (torn into small pieces)
1 cucumber (peeled sliced)
1 tomato (medium, chopped)
1/2 cup red onion (sliced)
1/3 cup feta cheese (crumbled)
Dressing: Combine 2 tbsp. olive oil, 2 tbsp. lemon juice, 1 teaspoon oregano and 1/2 teaspoon salt
(80 calories serving, 7g fat, 2g saturated fat - Oregon State University Cooperative Extension Service)

Vegan Recipe

Vegan diets are like a vegetarian diet except they also exclude animal products such as eggs and dairy products. This type of diet can be used for heart health and diabetes management. (health.usnews.com)

Vegan Penne Arrabbiata (8 servings)
1/2 cup of olive oil
4 cloves garlic
4 (28oz) cans crushed tomatoes
1 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
basil either fresh or dried (6 leaves or 1 Tbsp dried)
1 bay leaf
16 oz Penne pasta
Put olive oil and chopped garlic in pan, cook until garlic is fragrant. Next add the rest of the ingredients and simmer for 20-30 minutes. Remove the bay leaf and discard. Follow directions for cooking pasta and combine.
(273 calories serving, 17.2g fat, 6.6 g protein)
Hi, I’m Brian! Brian B., considering I am the second one to this office with such a wonderful name! I will serve as the new AmeriCorps Community Resource Navigator for the next year. For those of you who do not know, the CRN is responsible for connecting low-income households with resources available in the county, as well as assisting with benefit applications through the MiBridges online system. I chose to move forward with this position because of the bottom line, helping people. Throughout my life, I have volunteered and lived by the “pay it forward” frame of mind. This position at Food Gatherers seemed to fit as the perfect stepping stone in continuing my journey to help others. I look forward to a very productive, prosperous year and can’t wait to get to know this fantastic staff.

What’s New at Food Gatherers?

Food Gatherers has a new team member: Brian Borregard

Exercise!

When you think of resistance training, you probably think of some muscle-bound guy over in the corner of the gym doing bicep curls trying to grunt and groan out that last rep to make his arms another inch bigger. Rarely do you think of a middle-aged soccer mom performing leg press to improve her body composition, but resistance training is just as (if not more) important to someone who is looking to reduce body fat and tone up as it is for someone who is looking to bulk up.

Resistance training is one of the most critically important modes of exercise that can be performed for improving body composition. Resistance training increases metabolic rate, enhances muscle mass, and leads to a more toned or firmed appearance.

When most people engage in an exercise program to lose weight, it is assumed they are looking to lose body fat mass and not lean muscle tissue, as it is the loss of unsightly fat that makes us look better. The problem is that most people judge their success or failure in this process with a measurement device that only measures weight (the scale), not fat, and in doing so they never have a clear idea of exactly what is happening with their body composition (the ratio of fat mass to total mass, otherwise known as percent body fat). Successful weight loss programs focus on reducing percent body fat both by decreasing fat mass and by increasing muscle mass. By focusing on both sides of the body fat fraction (fat mass/total mass), you will see a much more dramatic improvement in percent body fat (and appearance) than if you just focus on fat mass. This is where resistance training comes in.

Performing a basic resistance training workout ensures that your muscle mass is preserved during a period of extended caloric restriction (like that which occurs during dieting). Resistance training stimulates muscle regeneration and growth, allowing damaged fibers to repair themselves (this damage can occur by either resistance training or extreme caloric restriction). Furthermore, resistance training can stimulate the growth of existing muscle fibers, making your muscles denser and your body more tone. Indeed, it is resistance training that distinguishes the people who look tone and firm following weight reduction from the people who have lost weight but still look flabby and unfit.

Just as important as the preservation of muscle mass is the increase in resting metabolic rate that occurs with resistance training and subsequent muscle gain. Since muscle mass is very metabolically active (requiring a significant amount of energy to survive), the more of it you have, the higher your metabolism will be. In fact, differences in muscle mass account for the majority of differences in metabolism and rate of weight reduction between men and women (with men being able to lose weight at a faster rate as a result of their higher metabolism, due in large part to their greater muscle mass). So, in short, the more muscle you have, the higher your metabolism will be, the more calories you can burn, and the more fat you can lose (and keep off). The best part about the increased metabolism associated with resistance training-induced muscle gain is that it elevates your metabolic rate all the time (not just when you’re lifting weights), so you are always in an accelerated fat burning state!

By Michael Stack, BS CFP CSCS*D, Exercise Physiologist and Owner of Applied Fitness Solutions (www.appliedfitsolutions.com).

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