

Low Fat Cooking Tips

Barbecues

- Marinate chicken breast fillets or lean meat in fruit or wine and herbs before grilling on the barbecue.
- Bake fish fillets or kebabs in foil with seasoning and lemon juice.
- Make kebabs using lean meat and vegetable chunks.
- Pre-cook whole potatoes in the microwave or oven, then crisp on the barbecue.

Breakfast cereals

- Choose an untoasted high fibre cereal.
- Use fat reduced milk.
- Top with fresh or canned fruit (first drain off juice)

Cooked vegetables

- Add low fat yoghurt instead of sour cream to jacket potatoes.
- Add squeeze of lemon or ground pepper to freshly steamed or microwaved vegetables.
- Stir fry vegetables in a little water and salt reduced soy sauce.

Dinner

- Have lots of vegetables, and use small portions of meat, chicken or fish.
- Use low fat ricotta cheese, with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese for flavour in cheese dishes.
- Enjoy the meal to comfort. Don't overeat.

Frying foods

- Use a non-stick frypan.
- Brush the base of the pan with oil, instead of pouring oil into the pan, or
- Brown microwaved vegetables under the griller for crispness without the fat.

Lunch

- For variety, try fresh fruit salad and low fat yoghurt.
- Open sandwiches with lots of salad vegetables.
- Jaffle - two slices of thick wholemeal bread, very light spread of margarine on the outside only. (Some sandwich toasters don't need fat to stop them sticking). Try a filling of baked beans or lean ham and asparagus.
- The sandwich is still Australia's lunch. Fill with lots of juicy salad vegetables and add a small serving of lean meat, skinless chicken or fish or a reduced fat cheese. You won't even notice there isn't any margarine!

Pasta

- Have a generous serving of pasta with a small serve of sauce.

Roast dinner

- Select a lean leg of lamb - trim off any fat.
- Cook in a roasting pan with a little water, wine or stock.
- Brush microwaved vegetables with vegetable oil and bake in a separate pan to brown.

Sandwiches

- Use thick slices of bread, preferably wholemeal.
- Use a thin scrap of polyunsaturated fat reduced spread.
- Use a thin spread of avocado instead of margarine in salad sandwiches.
- Add lots of salad vegetables to make a juicy sandwich.
- Use thin slices of lean meat, canned fish or reduced fat cheese.

Soups and sauces

- Use evaporated skim milk for cream soups.
- Use pureed vegetables to thicken sauces.
- Use wholegrain, barley, lentils to thicken casseroles or stews.

Toast

- Use thick sliced bread.
- Avoid using high fat spreads such as peanut butter, cheese spread and, if using margarine, use just a very thin spread of polyunsaturated margarine.
- Spread with ricotta or cottage cheese, marmalade, honey, vegemite, chutney, mustard, or top with a
- small serve of baked beans, spaghetti or fresh tomato.

Fast Food at Home

We buy takeaways because they're quick and convenient. Yet there are a number of fast food meals you can prepare at home without extra fat. Try these home-made fast foods

- Cereal, low fat milk and fruit: Makes a great meal or snack any time of the day; very useful if you're preparing food just for yourself. Avoid toasted muesli unless it has the Heart Foundation Tick.
- Fruit and vegetables: Fresh fruit has to be the fastest food around; sliced tomato, cucumber or celery with a little grated reduced fat cheese grilled on toast.

- Hamburger: Use low fat meat patties (commercial varieties are available), and lots of salad.
- Low fat yoghurt: Add some chopped fresh fruit or fruit salad to make a small meal.
- Pita pizza: Add tomato paste and cottage cheese to pita or Lebanese bread, then top with mushrooms, onion, capsicum or pineapple. Sprinkle with black pepper or herbs and some reduced fat cheese. Cook under the griller.
- Sandwich: This reliable snack or meal can be made in minutes. On cool days use hot ingredients, eg. baked beans, spaghetti, corn, between two slices of toast and make into a jaffle.
- Something different: Add a little honey and cinnamon to some low fat yoghurt. Slice up an apple and sprinkle with lemon juice to prevent browning. Dip the apple into the yoghurt for a great snack.
- Soup: Make a big pot of vegetable soup with low fat ingredients. Keep in the fridge and heat up serves as required.

Takeaways

If you want to maintain a healthy weight you will need to think about your selection of takeaway foods. Unfortunately, most takeaway foods have a lot of fat. The best choices listed below have the least fat.

- Barbecue chicken: Remove the skin and fat and choose the breast meat - chicken breast has a lower fat content. Don't eat the stuffing because the breadcrumbs/flour soak up lots of fat. Leave the gravy as it's high in fat and salt.
- Chinese meals: Wise selections include steamed rice, mixed vegetable dishes, lean beef, seafood and stir fries.
- Corn cob/cobettes: High in fibre and low in fat, but don't add margarine.
- Hamburgers: Made with lean grilled meat and lots of salad can make a nutritious meal without too much fat. Ask that no butter or margarine be added to the bun, and ask for extra salad.
- Italian: Pasta with tomato-based sauces. Pizza with low fat toppings.
- Lebanese: Donor kebabs, shish kebabs, pita bread with tabouli, Lebanese bread with salad.
- Salad bars: Usually offer a good range of low fat choices. Some salads, such as bean salad and rice salad, can make a complete meal. Limit the salad dressings and avoid salads in mayonnaise as they are high in fat.
- Sandwiches and bread rolls: Ask for them to be made without margarine and with low fat fillings like lean meat, reduced fat cheese, skinless chicken, salmon, tuna and salads. Wholemeal bread is generally more filling and satisfying to the appetite.

Dining Out

Maintaining healthy eating need not stop you from going to a restaurant or a friend's place. With a careful selection of foods and drinks you can enjoy yourself. Plan so you avoid overeating.

Tips

- Consider the menu and choose a couple of options that appeal. Ask about any added cream or butter sauces and request these are not added. Also ask no butter or oil be added to vegetables or salad. Ask for vinegar dressing on the side so you can add it yourself. These are simple requests that can be easily met by the chef. Select fresh, grilled seafood rather than crumbed and fried.
- Choose a pasta dish with a tomato-based sauce instead of a creamy one.
- Remove any fat from foods served to you. For example, remove the fat and skin from poultry and trim the fat from the meat.
- Pass up the rich desserts - or go halves with someone else.
- Ask for small meals or choose entree-sized dishes.
- Beware of smorgasbords - they encourage you to eat much more than you need.
- Keep your meat/poultry serves small and have generous serves of salad.
- Garlic and herb breads are very high in fat. Ask for fresh bread and add only a thin scrape of margarine, if any at all.

Drinks

- Fruit juice, wine, soda
- Water: plain / mineral / soda
- Low joule soft drinks
- Tea, coffee, herb teas, coffee substitute (use low fat milks if required)

Alcohol

Alcohol is a common part of the Australian lifestyle. It can also contribute to excess weight because it is often enjoyed along with high fat foods such as nuts, chips and pastries. It is important to keep your alcohol to a minimum if you are to achieve your healthy weight.

Tips to lower your alcohol intake

- Introduce the spacer: Space your alcoholic drinks with a low calorie drink like plain mineral water. Bitters, lime and soda makes a refreshing low alcoholic drink.
- Dilute the damage: Half wine or whisky with half plain mineral water. Do the cut-back Use only half measures of spirits in your drinks:
- Change your beer: Low alcohol beers have less calories than regular beer.
- Try mixing wine with plain mineral water or soda. Ask for a jug of water at the restaurant. You can then sip and enjoy your beer or wine.

This leaflet cannot be completely comprehensive and is intended as a guide only. The information may change in the future. Visit relevant website for updates. If you have further questions you should raise them with your own doctor.