Healthy Cooking & Nutrition

HEHA

Healthy Eating Healthy Action
Oranga Kai - Oranga Pumau
Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA) is a Ministry of Health campaign to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. It is a joint approach between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). For more information about HEHA visit www.bopdhb.govt.nz and click on the HEHA logo.
Hi, I’m Stephen Cameron, HEHA Community Educator for the Bay of Plenty District Health Board. I have been a chef for the last 20 years before heading to university to complete a Bachelor of Sport and Recreation through AUT with a focus on nutrition and healthy living. I now travel around the Bay of Plenty showing communities how to cook healthy, fresh and budget-friendly home cooked meals.

Healthy living is having a well-balanced lifestyle with plenty of everyday foods and good levels of activity. That doesn’t mean never having an ice cream or takeaways, but keeping them to an occasional food.

Evidence shows that to get the best long-term results for a healthy, balanced lifestyle, it’s the small, continuous and lasting changes to healthy eating, made over time, that make the difference.
Here are some tips that I talk about in my cooking workshops, plus some extras that you and your whanau may find helpful:

- For a more balanced lifestyle, make small changes to one or two areas first rather than completely changing everything - you’re more likely to be successful that way.

- Feel like something sweet? Try fruit salad with frozen yoghurt or a grilled banana with a small scoop of yoghurt.

- Fruit juice is high in energy\(^2\) and you don’t get the benefits you would from eating a piece of fruit, such as fibre which makes it more filling. Replace juice with a piece of fruit or dilute with half water.

- By adding lots of colour from fruit and vegetables into your diet you get all the important nutrients you require.

- If you can’t get fresh fish, try canned fish in spring water or brine (not oil!). It’s a great source of protein for muscle building, high in calcium for strong bones and an oily fish like salmon or tuna can be high in omega 3 - great brain food.

- The phrase ‘baked not fried’ doesn’t always mean its good for you, it can still be high in energy\(^2\) and fat which is not good if you are watching your weight or want to improve your heart health.

- Canned and frozen fruit and vegetables are just as good as fresh fruits and vegetables as they are ‘snap’ frozen as soon as they are harvested, keeping in all the vitamins and minerals. Choose tinned fruit with no added sugar. Try adding frozen vegetables to pasta or stews.

- A healthy plate is half vegetables, a quarter protein (meat or eggs) and the rest carbohydrates like potatoes or pasta.

- Don’t have lots of occasional foods\(^{12}\) around in the house - remember out of sight, out of mind!

- When cooking with oil use a vegetable oil like canola, olive or rice bran oil. Animal fats like butter, lard or dripping are high in saturated fat which clog up your arteries. Palm and coconut are the exception to the rule, these vegetable oils are very high in saturated fat.

- Remember all oil adds to energy\(^2\) so only use small amounts.

\(^2\) & \(^{12}\) see glossary pages 11 to 13
## Healthy eating healthy action tips 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tip No.</th>
<th>Healthy Eating Tips</th>
<th>Healthy Action Tips</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eat breakfast at home for a healthy, low cost way to start the day. Try wheat biscuits and trim milk to boost your energy, wholemeal toast and banana to feed your mind or porridge with milk and honey.</td>
<td>Too busy for exercise? Plan ahead! Schedule realistic amounts of activity into your routine and do your best to stick to it. Set your alarm earlier if you need to, or have some ‘active’ breaks at work.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>As a general rule, adults need about six to eight glasses of fluid per day, but this doesn’t necessarily have to be just water. You can include milk, fruit and herb teas as well as tea and coffee in moderation.</td>
<td>Choose a sport or activity that is right for you. Take time to consider what will best suit you. Think about convenience, your budget, any existing medical conditions, and what you will enjoy.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Milk is a good source of minerals such as calcium. If you have a glass of milk every day, by switching from full fat dark-blue top milk to trim green top will cut out 2800g fat over a year – equivalent to nearly six packs of butter!</td>
<td>Ready to get active and want to find activities in your area? Contact Sport Bay of Plenty (<a href="http://www.sportbop.co.nz">www.sportbop.co.nz</a>) for an up to date directory of physical activity options or sports clubs or call 0800 ACTIVE for advice on getting started.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>If you don’t have time to make lunch in the morning, make a bit of extra dinner the night before and have leftovers for lunch the next day. Remember food safety! The 4 Cs: clean, cook, cover and chill.</td>
<td>Don’t be a hero! Set realistic goals and celebrate your success. If you’re not used to being active, start with walking for 10 minutes twice a day during your work breaks.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Frozen and canned fruit and veggies with no added salt or sugar are just as good as fresh. Plus they’re a great option to have on hand for a quick and healthy snack. So stock up today!</td>
<td>Listen to your body. Getting more active isn’t about ‘no pain no gain’. If an activity causes you pain slow down or stop altogether. If you are worried, consult a health professional before continuing.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Cut down on excess salt. Too much salt in the diet is associated with high blood pressure and is a risk factor for stroke. Highly processed foods such as pies, sausages, ready meals and takeaway foods are high in salt. Prepare foods at home with minimal salt but when you do use salt, remember to use iodised salt.</td>
<td>Short bursts of activity of 10 minutes or more all add up to a healthier lifestyle. Walking is an easy way to get exercise into your day, use a pedometer to set personal goals and celebrate your successes!</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Fill a bottle of water from the tap and add a slice of fruit such as lemon, orange or apple and store in the freezer overnight. You have a healthy refreshing drink ready for the next day and you’ll be saving money!</td>
<td>Take opportunities to be active during your day. Deciding to take the active option will help you accumulate 30 minutes moderate physical activity each day. Opt for the stairs, walk to the shop, or park further away than normal.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Aim for 5 portions or more of fruit and vegetables a day - 3 veg and 2 fruit. This has been shown to help control weight and they contain amazing antioxidants which can help reduce certain cancers. A portion will fit into the palm of your hand.</td>
<td>Children need at least 60 minutes moderate activity each day. That’s twice the daily recommendation for adults. If your child isn’t being regularly active, switch off the telly and go play together!</td>
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**Healthy eating healthy action tips 9 to 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Fish and shellfish are very healthy and make a quick and easy low cost meal.</strong> Try steamed fish or mussels with lemon juice, or boiled fish heads with onions.</td>
<td>Having fun with friends and family is a great way to get active. And you’ll be healthier without even realising! Set a time each week to meet up in the park or at the beach for a game of cricket or touch rugby.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Take advantage of the wide variety of seasonal fruit available.</strong> Look for roadside bargains which are often cheaper than in the shops. Apples, bananas, nectarines, melon and grapes are an ideal snack.</td>
<td>Have fun! Enjoyment is essential for maintaining your commitment to an active lifestyle. Choosing group or family based activities can help you stay motivated and positive. You are worth the effort!</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>When choosing meat, look for trimmed or lean meats.</strong> Animal fat contains a lot of saturated fat which causes heart disease. Why pay for fat that you will cut off? Chicken breasts and fish are naturally lower in fat - as long as they are not fried!</td>
<td>Make the most of the longer daylight hours during the summer with friends and family. Kick a ball around, throw a frisbee in the park or have some fun inventing a new game. And remember to slip, slop, slap and wrap.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Snacks don’t need to come in packets.</strong> When making dinner, chop some extra carrot, celery and cucumber sticks and have them with a low fat dip the next day - a quick and healthy snack.</td>
<td>Challenge yourself. If you are already regularly active, including activity that makes you ‘huff and puff’ will provide additional health benefits as well as a new challenge. As well, can you help someone inactive to get started?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Eat a range of different coloured fruits and vegetables.</strong> Colourful vegetables contain nutrients needed for health, protect against aging and can help reduce the risk of some cancers. Different coloured foods such as green, red, yellow, orange, purple and white provide different nutrients. Ideally eat from each colour group every day.</td>
<td>In terms of making goals for activity, adults should achieve at least 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity on five or more days of the week. The 30 minutes can be achieved either by doing all the daily activity in one session, or through several shorter bursts of activity of 10 minutes or more.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Canned tuna is great to keep in your desk draw at work for lunch or a snack,</strong> and it’s an easy way to get your 2 portions of fish per week. Tuna is full of goodness; it’s high in quality protein, low in saturated fat and is great for your heart. Stock up on some cans today!</td>
<td>If you are working all day think about how you can fit some physical activity into your day. Perhaps you could walk or cycle to and from work. Try to make time to go for a walk with a friend or colleague at lunchtime. A pedometer is useful to keep motivated and help celebrate your successes!</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Don’t go to the supermarket when you’re hungry!</strong> You are much more likely to reach for the packet of chips or biscuits! Shopping for snacks should be the same as other food shopping, write a list and stick to it.</td>
<td>Getting active doesn’t have to mean dragging yourself to the gym every day. Explore new areas on foot or by bike. Tauranga City has over 40 kilometres of walkways which are open to the public covering stunning coastal areas, estuaries and inland reserves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Buy fresh fruit and veggies in season.</strong> They are cheaper and often better quality when grown locally. Avoid the supermarket rush and take advantage of roadside stalls and farmers markets for cheap, quality produce.</td>
<td>Be an active family. Choosing activities you can all do together is great way to include exercise into a busy routine. Brainstorm new ideas while eating dinner together. Perhaps even challenge your neighbours!</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Have a selection of healthy snacks to hand in the cupboard at home.</strong> Ideal snacks for someone watching their weight include home made popcorn, carrot, cucumber and celery sticks, mini muffin with fruit such as blueberry, lower fat biscuits such as arrowroot, low fat yoghurt.</td>
<td><strong>Lots of things you do each day count as exercise such as walking, gardening, climbing stairs, cycling and even housework!</strong> Short bursts of activity of 10 minutes or more all add up to a healthier lifestyle, so just keep moving!</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td><strong>When choosing a cereal it is important to check the ingredients.</strong> Look for cereals marked as 'high fibre' or 'contains whole grains'. These types of cereals are more slowly digested and will help you to feel full for longer.</td>
<td><strong>It's never too late to start.</strong> There is no such thing as being too old or too out of shape to be active. Everyone can enjoy the benefits of regular activity. If you are apprehensive about getting started talk to your health professional about a Green Prescription.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Eating a little and often, such as regular meals and snacks, can help keep blood sugar levels stable and reduce the risk of over eating at meal times.</strong> Plan your snacks at regular intervals and stick to them, rather than grazing all day.</td>
<td><strong>Parking a little further away from the shops, work or school and walking the final stretch is a great way to get some quick and easy exercise into your day,</strong> and it doesn’t take that much longer. If you take the bus, get off a stop or two earlier.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Hunger can be confused with dehydration which causes tiredness and headaches. Keep a water bottle to hand to remind yourself to stay hydrated and alert.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Keep at it.</strong> There may be periods when you go off track in reaching your physical activity goals. Try hard to get back on track by fitting in some activity when you can and don’t give up.</td>
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Many foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt have healthy alternatives. With little changes to diet over time, the effect can be massive on a healthy lifestyle. Remember replacing food with healthy alternatives is not about removing important foods from our diet.

**Replace with lower fat milk**

A good example of healthy alternatives is changing from full fat milk to light, lower fat milks. Milk is a healthy everyday food\(^{10}\)/drink packed with calcium and protein with a recommended daily intake of 250mls. This can build up over the day in tea, coffee, healthy cereals and smoothies.

Replace standard dark blue top milk with light blue top milk.

One 250ml glass of standard dark blue top milk has 1\(\frac{2}{3}\) teaspoons of fat. If you drink one glass every day for a year, that’s 602 teaspoons of fat! If you replace standard dark blue top milk with light blue top milk, the reduction in fat is massive. More than half the amount of fat in your diet from milk will be reduced.

One 250ml glass of light blue top milk has \(\frac{3}{4}\) teaspoon of fat. If you drink one glass every day for a year, that’s 273 teaspoons - a lot less than standard dark blue top and you still get all the great health benefits.

Replace light blue top milk with green top milk.

When you find you’re really enjoying the light fresh taste of a lower fat milk (and you will if you give it a chance!) move on to green top milk or calci-trim milk. One 250ml glass of green top milk has 0.05 teaspoons of fat. If you drink one glass of green top milk every day for a year, that’s only 18\(\frac{1}{4}\) teaspoons of fat added to your diet from milk a year.

**Replace with lower fat cheeses**

Types of cheeses vary in the amount of fat content. Try to choose ones lower in fat such as Edam which is 25% less fat than other standard cheese like Cheddar, Colby and Tasty. Some standard soft cheeses such brie and camembert are also 25% less fat.

**Replace with yoghurt**

Yoghurt can be used as a replacement for many foods:

- Use light plain yoghurt instead of coconut cream or cream in chicken curry (see recipe - chicken curry, page 26).
- Use light plain yoghurt as a dressing instead of mayonnaise (see recipe - Moroccan chicken salad with yogurt dressing, page 22).
- When you’re having a sometimes\(^{11}\) treat in a café, ask for yoghurt instead of the high fat cream on the side.
- Ice cream is a high fat dessert, try replacing with light plain or fruit yogurt and fruit.
- Fruit smoothies are a great healthy snack, but make sure you use yogurt and trim milk rather than ice cream.

\(^{10}\) & \(^{11}\) see glossary pages 12 & 13
Ice cold water with a sprig of mint, fruit pieces or cucumber pieces is a refreshing alternative to many drinks:

Soft drinks, cordials and fruit juice are an occasional*12 drink and high in sugar (there are 8 teaspoons of sugar in a 350ml glass of orange juice) - replace with ice cold water with a squeeze of fresh orange or lemon.

Sports drinks are only suitable during or after intense physical training so when you’re not training, replace with water.

Fill a water bottle and chill in the fridge, then take with you when it’s time to head out and PUSH PLAY.

Tinned tomatoes can replace many other foods when cooking - they are flavoursome and have lots of health benefits:

When making a curry, instead of adding coconut cream or cream, replace with tinned tomatoes for a rich thick base (see recipe - chicken curry, page 26).

When cooking around 5 cups of lean mince, replace 1 cup with 1 tin of tomatoes and add 3 cups of extra mixed vegetables - this will make the dish light, flavoursome and healthy.

As above, when making a stew cook a little less meat and replace with tinned tomatoes and extra vegetables.

The equipment and method chosen for cooking can have an influence on how healthy the food is:

Replace standard pans with non-stick pans as they only need a little baking spray or no oil at all when cooking.

Replace frying with grilling meats as all the fats drain away from the meat and can be discarded.

Replace boiling vegetables with steaming and microwaving as nutrients are lost into the boiling water. Steaming and microwaving retains more of the healthy nutrients in the vegetables.

*12 see glossary page 13
Carbohydrate\textsuperscript{1}

Carbohydrate is a crucial fuel supply for the body and comes from wholegrain breads, cereals and pasta, fruit and vegetables and beans and legumes/beans. The human brain lives only on a form of carbohydrate (glucose) so it is important to keep up this source in your diet.

Energy\textsuperscript{2}

Energy is the measurement that food is counted in. In some instances this is called kilojoules and others it is calories. In New Zealand we use the metric system called kilojoules. The amount of energy you need each day to maintain a healthy weight depends on your age, gender, height, weight and physical activity. It is important to watch your intake of energy and you want to make sure that the amount of energy ‘in’ equals the amount of energy ‘out’ (via activity) to ensure a healthy weight balance.

This information in this table is for ‘average’ adults. Individual needs vary a lot, so use this as a general guide only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>KJ per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.6m</td>
<td>31-50</td>
<td>60kg</td>
<td>Sedentary*</td>
<td>7600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate activity**</td>
<td>9800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.9m</td>
<td>31-50</td>
<td>80kg</td>
<td>Sedentary*</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate activity**</td>
<td>13,400</td>
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*\textit{Sedentary} - seated work with little or no strenuous leisure activity.
**\textit{Moderate activity} - standing or walking work or sedentary work with regular exercise of least 30 mins.

Fat\textsuperscript{3}

Fat is a macronutrient found in food, along with protein and carbohydrate. Fat is very high in energy compared to carbohydrate and protein: 1 gram of fat has 38 kilojoules versus 17 kilojoules for 1 gram of protein or carbohydrate. Fat includes liquid oils such as olive oil, as well as solid fats such as butter, vegetable shortening, ghee and lard. Fats are classified as saturated or unsaturated, depending on their chemical structure.

Saturated fat\textsuperscript{4}

Saturated fats - from meat, poultry and dairy foods - have been shown to be strongly linked to heart disease. So we’re encouraged to limit these by using lean meat and low-fat dairy.

Unsaturated fat\textsuperscript{5}

Unsaturated (good) fats include polyunsaturated and monounsaturated types, which are better for you because they help maintain healthy cholesterol levels. Monounsaturated ‘good’ oils include avocado, canola, olive, macadamia, rice bran and peanut oils. Polyunsaturated ‘good’ oils include sunflower, safflower, soy bean, walnut and sesame oils.
Fibre

Fibre is from plant matter and is in two forms - soluble and insoluble. Soluble fibre passes through the body soaking water up to make waste matter softer, moving it through the body faster. Insoluble fibre is like a bottle brush, brushing up the waste matter and cholesterol and taking it out of the body. These two work together in partnership. Choose a fibre-filled diet rich in wholegrains, fruit and vegetables. Tip - have a piece of fruit rather than fruit juice as the juicing process removes a lot of the fibre.

Everyday foods

Everyday foods are the healthiest choices from the four main food groups and a variety of these should be consumed everyday:
- vegetables and fruit
- milk and milk products (for example, yoghurt, cheese) and alternatives
- proteins such as lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dried peas, beans and lentils
- breads, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles
- water is the best drink

Everyday foods are the healthiest choices because, in general, they:
- are rich sources of nutrients, including vitamins and minerals
- contain less saturated fat and/or salt and/or added sugar
- help to prevent you from consuming too many kilojoules (energy)

Sometimes foods

These foods and drinks are mostly processed foods with some added fat and/or salt and/or sugar so they should be consumed less often. Examples of sometimes foods are:
- processed fish or chicken
- flavoured milk
- muesli bars
- packet soups
- many muffins

Although sometimes foods are sources of nutrients, including vitamins and minerals, they should be restricted because, in general, they:
- contain moderate levels of saturated fat and/or salt and/or added sugar
- can contribute to an intake of too many kilojoules (energy)

continued .......

Minerals

Minerals form the body’s backbone - literally as well as metaphorically. Some, like calcium and fluorine, are structural, whereas others are essential to the many chemical and electrical reactions occurring every second of every day within the body. By eating a well-balanced diet you can ensure that you get an adequate intake of all your minerals.

Protein

Protein is found throughout the body - in muscle, bone, skin, hair, and virtually every other body part or tissue. It enables the growth and repair of body tissues; forms muscles, skin and hair; maintains fluid balance, among many other things. Good sources of protein include lean meat, fish, poultry and beans. Dairy, nuts, fruit and vegetables also provide some protein.

Vitamins

Vitamins are divided into two types: water-soluble and fat-soluble. Both are important in the body but they perform different functions. The majority of vitamins are water-soluble, namely all the B vitamins and vitamin C. Because water-soluble vitamins are dissolved in our body fluids, we are unable to store these vitamins, making a regular supply essential to our well-being. In contrast, fat-soluble vitamins, A, D, E and K, can be stored in the body’s fat deposits, in which they are both transported and stored. By eating a well-balanced diet you can ensure that you get an adequate intake of all your vitamins.
A meal that contains mostly sometimes foods can provide you with too many kilojoules (energy). You can limit these foods by serving smaller portions. These foods can contribute to a healthy diet but should be served in much smaller amounts than everyday foods.

The term ‘sometimes’ does not mean that they cannot be served every day. Plain biscuits for example, may be eaten every day, but they should only be eaten in very small quantities; one biscuit per day is plenty for young children.

**Occasional foods**

These foods and drinks are high in saturated fat and/or salt and/or sugar and so should be provided infrequently, for example, at a family occasion or other exceptional event:

- confectionery
- deep-fried foods (for example, chips, deep-fried fish)
- full-sugar and artificially sweetened energy drinks
- full-sugar and artificially sweetened carbonated beverages (for example, soft drinks/fizzy drinks)
- flavoured water, fortified water and sports drinks
- any beverages labelled with ‘not recommended for children’

Occasional foods should be restricted because, in general, they:

- are low in vitamins and minerals and provide minimal nutritional value
- contain significant levels of saturated fat and/or salt and/or added sugar
- usually contribute excess kilojoules (energy)
Recipes

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Lunch or on the side
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- Tomato pasta and meatballs: Page 29
Healthy snack ideas

With some preparation, party snacks like dips and crackers can be a healthy option, as a sometimes food.

Salmon which is high in omega 3 (the good oil), makes a delicious dip with light sour cream. Tinned salmon or tuna is a good low cost substitute that also works well in this dip recipe.

For something different try 8 sundried tomatoes and 4 basil leaves blended together with light sour cream. For dipping, rice crackers are low fat and a tasty alternative to potato chips. Vegetables like carrots and celery are great dippers when cut into sticks.

Smoked salmon and dill dip
(Serves group of 10 for side dip)

Ingredients
Smoked salmon fillet     200 grams
(or tinned salmon/tuna for a lower cost option)
Light sour cream     ½ cup
Lemon juice     1½ tablespoon
Dill finely chopped     1 tablespoon
Chives finely chopped     2 tablespoon

Method for dip preparation
1. Take the salmon or fish and dice until fine
2. Place in a bowl and add the sour cream, lemon juice, chopped chives and dill
3. With a spatula or wooden spoon, mix all together
4. Check the seasoning, adding pepper to taste
5. Refrigerate until required
6. Serve with rice crackers, celery sticks, carrot sticks or grainy breads

Tip!
Wholemeal pita breads toasted and cut into small pieces are a great healthy option for dipping.

Tip!
Store-bought or homemade hummus is a big favourite with everyone!
Ideal snacks for everyone

Many people feel guilty about eating between meals believing that all snack foods are bad for us. The fact is that snacking is totally normal and an acceptable part of both children’s and adult’s diets. Snacks make a valuable contribution to our overall nutrient intake and the right choice of snack foods can help us to reach our daily vitamin and mineral requirements. Remember we should all be aiming for 5 + a day of fruit and vegetables.

Healthy snack ideas

- Fresh fruit such as apples, oranges, banana, peaches, nectarines, melon
- Dried fruit and seeds
- Home made popcorn
- Vegetable sticks e.g. carrot, cucumber, celery
- Wholemeal crackers
- Rice crackers with a little low fat dip
- Wholemeal toast thinly spread with low fat spread
- Wholegrain breakfast cereal
- Mini muffin with fruit such as blueberry
- Lower fat biscuits such as arrowroot or digestive
- Low fat yoghurts
- Smoothies

Tip!
Remember that snacks are smaller than meals, so watch the portion size!

Tip!
For every day snacks choose those that are high in nutrients such as fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Tip!
Plan your snacks at regular intervals rather than grazing all day. Aim for mid-morning, mid-afternoon and early evening.

Tip!
Plan ahead and make sure you have a range of snacks to hand.

Tip!
Don’t use snacks as an alternative to proper meals.

Tip!
Beans have a wide range of positive health benefits; they are cheap, nutritious, extremely versatile and packed with nutrients such as protein, fibre, foliate, calcium, magnesium, iron and zinc. Beans and pulses help lower blood cholesterol as they are high in fibre so very beneficial for intestinal health. Canned beans are a great store cupboard item. You could vary the types of beans or add chickpeas. This dish can be eaten on its own for lunch or as a side dish to a main meal like chicken curry.

Bean Salad
(Serves 4-5)

Ingredients
Canned 4 bean mix - drained and rinsed 1 x 425g can
Canned whole kernel corn - drained 1 x 410g can
Chick peas - drained and rinsed 1 x 410g can
Mint and/or parsley - chopped 3 tablespoons
Spring onions - thinly sliced 3
Cucumber - diced ½
Tomatoes - cut into segments 2
Capsicum - diced 1 small
Baby spinach leaves or broken up lettuce leaves ½ bag

Method
Place all salad ingredients in a bowl with cracked pepper and a little salt then pour over dressing and mix. If you are preparing the salad for the next day, to stop it going soggy, split the cucumber down the middle and scoop out the watery seeds with a tea spoon before dicing. Then add the green leaves to the serving plate and place the bean mix on top.

Serve per person with either:
- chicken 200 grams remove skin, sprinkle with paprika then grill
- lean beef 180 grams remove fat, grill with garlic and cracked pepper
- lean lamb 180 grams remove fat, grill with a little Cajun spices
- baked fish 200 grams wrapped in a grease proof paper or tin foil parcel with squish of lemon juice a little ginger and small dash of sesame oil then bake at 180°C for about ten minutes

For the dressing
Ingredients
Lemon juice or a white vinegar 1 tablespoons
Good oil e.g. canola or soybean 3 tablespoons
Honey 1 teaspoon
Mustard 1 tablespoon

Put all dressing ingredients together in a screw top jar and shake well.

Tip!
Adding spices to meat is a great way to avoid salt whilst still enhancing the flavour of the food.
Soups are a healthy option all year round

Soups can be healthy, satisfying, comforting and go a long way for very little money. Everyone loves a good soup served with some nice fresh bread!

The great thing about soups is they capture all the goodness of the vegetables and they don’t need to be made with any fat to taste great. Remember soups freeze well, so like this recipe, make more than enough and freeze the leftovers for a healthy meal another day.

Chicken and vegetable soup
(Makes two servings for a family of four)

Ingredients

Chicken pieces
– such as thighs, legs or breasts
Water
Onion
Kumara - peeled & diced 1 inch cubes
Pumpkin - peeled & diced 1 inch cubes
Celery (optional) - diced 1 inch cubes
Peas
Frozen corn
Carrot - grated
Soup mix - washed and rinsed
Chicken stock powder
Cumin powder (optional)
Garam masala (optional)
Parsley - chopped

3 medium sized
8 cups
1 small
1 cup
½ cup
½ cup
1 medium
1 cup
2 level tablespoons
1 ½ level teaspoons
1 level teaspoons
3 tablespoons

Method
1. Remove all fat and skin from chicken pieces (wash chopping board thoroughly after preparing raw chicken)
2. In large pot bring 8 cups of water to the boil and add the chicken to poach
3. Turn down to simmer on a low heat for about 15 minutes
4. During the 15 minutes remove all the foam and fat from the top of the water with a ladle, to keep the broth pure
5. When the chicken is just cooked remove from water and place on a tray to cool
6. Once cooled, remove all chicken meat off the bones and dice into small pieces, then place in the fridge
7. Add all the vegetables, soup mix, stock powder, cumin powder and garam masala to the chicken stock and stir through, then bring back to the boil
8. When the broth boils, stir again and simmer on a low heat for 1 hour stirring every 15 minutes
9. Just before serving the soup add the chicken and parsley and boil again for 1 minute, then serve

Tip for vegetarians!
This soup can be made without the chicken, using a vegetable stock.
For lunch or on the side
The sesame oil and honey dressing in this dish is very tasty and kids just love noodles. This is a great way to get kids into the habit of eating raw vegetables as the dressing will make the vegetables taste delicious. Dress the salad five to ten minutes before serving, allowing time for the dressing to marinate the dish. If making the salad for a big group, where cost may be a factor, poach a whole chicken for about 1 hour. Then remove chicken fat, skin and bones and discard, leaving just the tasty chicken meat.

Japanese Cold Noodle Salad
(Serves family of 4)

Ingredients
Soba Japans dried noodles  2 bundles
Chicken thighs or breast   3 (500grams each, remove skin and fat)
Carrot - grated  1
Capsicum - finely or sliced diced  1
Bean sprouts  ¼ bag
Spring onion - finely sliced  1 stalk
Coriander - chopped  1 tablespoon
Celery - finely chopped  1 stalk
Mushrooms - thinly sliced (optional)  3
Plus any other seasonal vegetables that can be eaten raw like cabbage - finely sliced

Method
1. Cook noodles according to packet directions and cool by rinsing under cold water.
2. Poach chicken thighs in simmering water that just covers the chicken for about 15 mins - check if cooked and allow to cool.
3. Optional – marinate the mushrooms in a tablespoon of soy sauce for 10 mins.
4. Place grated and chopped vegetables in large bowl then add noodles.
5. Slice chicken then add to noodles and vegetables.
6. Pour dressing over mixture and mix all ingredients well together.
7. Optional – sprinkle over sesame seeds.

For the dressing
Ingredients
Lime or lemon juice   2 tablespoons
Sweat chilli sauce  1 tablespoon
Soy sauce Kikkoman low salt  1 tablespoon
(If not adding mushrooms with their marinade, add 1 more tablespoon of soy sauce)
Fish sauce  2 tablespoons
Sesame oil  2 tablespoons

Method
Put all dressing ingredients together in a screw top jar and shake well.

Tip!
Don’t add the dressing to the salad more than 10 mins before serving as it can make the vegetables decolour or go limp.

Tip!
The liquid that the chicken was poached in will make a great base for soups; skim any fat from liquid, add 1 chopped onion and mixture of vegetables with a little seasoning.
Festive flavours make this a family favourite

This is a great recipe for lunch and works well for a picnic. It is also a nice easy recipe which children can get involved with. Flour tortillas are soft and very versatile, making a nice change to sandwiches. Buy a large pack of 15 flour tortillas and freeze what you don’t use. For a festive flavour try a teaspoon of cranberry sauce with either chicken or turkey. The options for fillings are almost endless; avocado, cream cheese, grated carrot and finely sliced onion can all be added for variety. Flour tortillas can be served warm with warm fillings too.

Festive Wraps
(Serves 4)

Ingredients
4 teaspoons light mayonnaise
1 cup cooked chicken sliced or shaved turkey slices
2 tablespoons cranberry sauce or sweet chilli sauce
1 finely sliced tomato
½ cup grated cheese
4 large washed lettuce leaves
4 (6 inch) flour tortillas

Method
1. Heat a frying pan until hot, turn the heat off.
2. Lay the tortilla on the hot pan for 10 seconds each side
3. Lay each tortilla flat on a plate
4. Spread 1 teaspoon light mayonnaise around the centre of each tortilla
5. Place lettuce at the centre on top of the mayonnaise
6. Warm the cranberry sauce or sweet chili sauce with 1 tablespoon water and the chicken until just bubbling and sticky. Spread one quarter of the chicken on the lettuce
7. Lay tomato slices over the chicken
8. Sprinkle cheese over the top
9. Fold the flour tortilla, first bringing a small bit up from the bottom to cover the filling, and then bring each of the sides over the filling. This method stops the filling falling out when you pick it up!

Tip!
Look for shaved chicken or turkey on special at your supermarket.

Tip!
Sweet chilli sauce will last a long time and is a good store cupboard item. It is sweet but not hot. It can be used with meats & vegetables.

Tip!
Supermarket home brand flour tortillas are just as good as the more expensive ones.
Dressing key to tasty salad
The key to a good salad is the dressing. A good dressing brings all the salad flavours together. Vinaigrette dressings have four simple ingredients: oil, mustard, honey or sugar and an acid, either lemon juice or vinegar. All the ingredients need to be in harmony, not too sweet, not too sour and definitely not too oily. To make different vinaigrettes try other types of vinegar or mustard for each salad. Like wholegrain or a dijon mustard. There are many different types of vinegar: white, red wine and even raspberry. The small investment you make in these ingredients will make a lot of yummy, healthy salads.

Kumara and pineapple salad with orange dressing
(Serves family of 4 for side salad)

Ingredients
Good oil e.g. canola or soybean 1 tablespoon
Kumara - peeled & diced 1 inch cubes 2 medium
Sunflower seeds 2 tablespoons
Pineapple - peeled & diced 1 inch cubes 1/2
Dried apricots - sliced 3 tablespoons
Orange 1

Method
1. Toss diced kumara in a little olive oil and roast in the oven for 25 minutes at 170oC or gas mark 6.
2. Roast the sunflower seeds with the kumara for the last ten minutes.
3. When the kumara and the seeds are roasted, allow to cool a little and then add the pineapple.
4. Add the diced apricot.
5. Peel and dice one orange and add to the salad.

For the dressing
Ingredients
Juice from oranges 3 oranges
Juice from lemon ½ lemon
Wholegrain mustard 1 tablespoon
Good oil e.g. canola or soybean 3 tablespoons

Method
1. Juice the oranges into a small pot; then reduce over a moderate heat until you get a thick syrup.
2. Don’t leave unattended on the stove and burn the orange syrup.
3. When you get a thick consistency take off the stove and add the lemon juice.
4. Add the mustard and oil and mix well.
5. Pour over salad, mix well and leave to marinate for at least 15 minutes.
A tasty family meal and great for the lunchbox

This salad can be made by roasting a chicken for budget conscious large families. When preparing chicken for roasting, remove all visible fat from around the chicken cavity. Cook the chicken on a wire baking tray, which lifts the chicken from the base roasting tray and allows the fat to drain away and be discarded. When carving the chicken remove all skin and discard.

To make this salad more filling, add roasted kumara and pumpkin. Roast these in a separate tray so they don’t soak up all the bad chicken fat.

Moroccan chicken salad with yogurt dressing
(Serves family of 4)

Ingredients
Chicken breast    3 medium
Moroccan spice mix   2 tablespoons
Cucumber slices  ¼ cup
Salad greens                      1 bunch
Tomatoes diced small  2 medium
Red onion diced small   ½
Capsicum diced small  ½
Avocado (optional)  1
Kumara roasted (optional) 1
Pumpkin roasted (optional) ½ cup

Method for cooking chicken
1. Remove skin from chicken breast and rub Moroccan spice all over chicken
2. Grill the chicken or pan fry using a non-stick frying pan with only 1 tablespoon of oil, until cooked (about 20 minutes)
3. Keep chicken warm during salad preparation (if prefer with cold chicken, refrigerate until ready to serve)

For the dressing
Ingredients – whisk together
Juice from lemon    ½
Low fat yogurt     ½ cup
Garlic crushed then finely chopped   1 clove
Mint finely chopped  1 tablespoon

Method for serving
1. For one person - place chicken, salad ingredients and dressing into a bowl and toss together
2. Repeat process for each individual serving to ensure an even distribution of ingredients

Tip!
This salad makes a great lunch box meal. Refrigerate until ready to serve - especially the chicken. Keep the dressing separate until ready to serve so the salad ingredients stay crisp and fresh.

Tip!
Chicken fat and skin are high in saturated fat. For a healthy heart try to avoid eating chicken skin and remove as much fat as possible during preparation.
Dressing key to tasty salad
The key to a good salad is the dressing. A good dressing brings all the salad flavours together. Vinaigrette dressings have four simple ingredients: oil, mustard, honey or sugar and an acid, either lemon juice or vinegar. All the ingredients need to be in harmony, not too sweet, not too sour and definitely not too oily. To make different vinaigrettes try other types of vinegar or mustard for each salad. Like wholegrain or a dijon mustard. There are many different types of vinegar: white, red wine and even raspberry. The small investment you make in these ingredients will make a lot of yummy, healthy salads.

Smoked chicken and pasta salad
(Serves family of 4 for lunch)

Ingredients
Pasta 1 cup uncooked
Cooked smoked chicken 300 grams, remove skin and fat
Carrot - grated 1
Capsicum - finely diced 1/2
Cabbage – finely chopped 1/3 cup
(red is preferred or white)
Tomato - diced 1
Avocado - diced 1/2
Cucumber - sliced or diced 1/4 cup
Parsley - chopped 2 tablespoons

Method
1. Cook pasta according to packet directions in plenty of boiling water and cool by rinsing under cold water.
2. Let the pasta drain dry for several minutes and shake off any excess water.
3. Place vegetables and parsley in large bowl then add the cooked pasta.
4. Slice cooked chicken finely then add to pasta and vegetables.
5. Pour dressing over mixture and mix all ingredients well together, then serve.

For the dressing
Ingredients
Red wine vinegar 1 tablespoon
Honey 2 teaspoons
Dijon mustard 1 teaspoon
Good oil e.g. canola or soybean 4 tablespoons

Method
Put all dressing ingredients together in a screw top jar and shake well.
Salmon - the heart of goodness

Salmon is high in omega 3 (this is the good oil), which is loaded with heart health nutrients. This is the same for other oily fish like eel, mackerel, sardines and tuna. Tinned salmon or tuna is still a good low cost option that also works well in this salad. Evidences show that there are lots heart health benefits preserved in tinned fish. For improved health benefits try to eat oily fish at least twice a week with regular physical activity. So PUSH PLAY with a brisk walk, or a run, or a day out playing with the kids. Then top off the day with a salmon salad for a happy heart.

Smoked salmon watercress, roast pears and walnut salad
(Serves family of 4 for side salad)

Ingredients
Salmon 200 grams
Kikkoman’s low salt soya sauce 4 tablespoons
Honey 3 tablespoons
Watercress or salad greens 1 bunch
Walnuts fresh 5 tablespoons
Pears cored and diced 1 fresh raw
Baby potatoes 4 boiled and cut into quarters

Method for smoking fish, salmon or eel
1. Place fresh raw salmon on tray and rub in Kikkoman soya sauce
2. Rub the honey into the salmon and marinate in the fridge for no more than twenty minutes
3. Hot smoke the salmon in the smoker until just cooked, then let salmon cool until at room temperature
4. If not eating salmon after cooling to room departure, refrigerate until you are ready to prepare and eat the salad
5. As an alternative to smoking, bake in the oven at 180 degree for 10 mins

Method for salad preparation
6. Place walnuts on microwave dish and microwave on high for 1 minute, stir nuts then microwave for 1 more minute
7. Lightly brush pears with olive oil then place on oven tray
8. Place pears in pre heated oven at 180C, then roast for ten minutes, turn over pears and roast for a further 8 minutes
9. Wash and clean watercress, pick out tough stalks, then shake off any excess water
10. Put all ingredients in bowl, adding the smoked fish and lightly toss with dressing and pepper, then serve

For the dressing

Ingredients
Juice from lemon ½ lemon
Dijon mustard 1 tablespoon
Honey (optional) 1 teaspoon
Good oil e.g. canola or soybean 3 tablespoons

Method
Whisk all ingredients together in bowl

Tip!
This salad works well with smoked eel or kahawai. So grab the kids, PUSH PLAY and go fishing!
A low salt option is the healthy choice

Some brands of soy sauce can be high in salt, Kikkoman 43% less salt soy sauce is a healthier option when addressing salt levels in Asian style stir-fry. We only need about 920-1600mg (about ¼ teaspoon) of salt a day in our diet. Many of us get much more salt than this from the foods we eat. It’s good to remember that a lot of different processed foods can also be very high in salt. Ideally it is best to try and keep salt at a minimum with food preparation as this can assist with avoiding high blood pressure and heart disease. If you think you put too much salt with your food, try to slowly bring down the amount of salt you use until you are at the daily recommend amount.

Chicken or beef and vegetable stir-fry

**Ingredients**

- Good oil e.g. canola or soybean: 3 tablespoons
- Skinless chicken breast or lean beef: 600 grams (1½ cups)
- Onions - sliced: 1 large
- Garlic - chopped: 2 teaspoon or four cloves
- Ginger - chopped: 2 teaspoon
- Celery, mushrooms, broccoli, cauliflower, capsicum, carrots, courgettes, cabbage: 5 cups of the mix vegetables
- Egg noodles 98% fat free: 2 nests
- Sesame oil: 3 teaspoons
- Kikkoman 43% less salt soy sauce: 8 tablespoons
- Honey: 2 tablespoons (optional)

**Method for preparation**

1. Take fat and skin off chicken or fat off beef then cut into stir-fry slices
2. Then wash down chopping board thoroughly
3. Slice onions
4. Peel and chop ginger and garlic
5. Cut and slice all the vegetables into bite size pieces
6. Boil jug then pour boiling water over noodles and leave to soak for ten minutes, then drain and cool under cold water, then drain again
7. Place carrots and cauliflower into boiling water for two minute then add broccoli and cook for one more minute, then drain and cool under cold water, then drain again

**Method for cooking**

For best results cook the stir-fry in two batches this will retain more heat in the pan stopping the stir-fry from stewing.

1. Heat oil in a hot frying pan
2. Cook chicken for 2 minutes or beef for 30 seconds on hot heat
3. Add onions then garlic and cook for 1 minute mixing well
4. Add celery, mushrooms and cabbage and cook for 1 minute
5. Add the rest of the vegetables mixing well
6. Add noodles and mix well
7. Add the soy sauce, honey and sesame oil and mix well for another 2 minutes
A vegetable curry with chicken

A curry is a great way to cook with a lot of vegetables and a little bit of meat and the dish will still have excellent flavour with texture. The vegetables in this recipe are a just a guide, you can add or exchange with other seasonal or cheaper vegetables such as silver beet or peeled pumpkin. Fresh spices are high in essential oils that are beneficial to good health. Remember though spices lose flavours after a period of time in storage (five months) so buy spices in small amounts regularly from an Indian spice shop if possible and keep using them.

Chicken Curry
(serves family of 5)

Ingredients
Good oil e.g. canola or soybean 3 tablespoons
Onions sliced 2 large
Garlic cloves 6 cloves
Ginger 2 tablespoons
Kumara 1 medium size
Curry powder fresh 5 tablespoons of mild or 3 hot
Cinnamon stick fresh 1
Star aniseed fresh 1
Cardamom spice pods 7
Skinless chicken meat 1 kg
Tinned tomatoes 3 tins
Cauliflower 1 small
Beans or peas frozen or fresh 1 ½ cups
Natural yogurt 1 cup

Preparation Method
1. Cut skinless chicken into bite sizes pieces and remove any bits of fat
2. Wash chopping board thoroughly after cutting raw chicken
3. Slice onions
4. Crush and chop garlic and ginger
5. Cut all the vegetables into small bite sizes pieces

Cooking Method
1. Heat oil to moderate heat then add onions and garlic, ginger and kumara - sweat in the pan until onions are transparent
2. On a low heat add the curry powder, cinnamon stick, star aniseed, and cardamom pods then toast and mix in pan for about 30 seconds
3. Then add 40 mls of water to stop the spices from sticking or burning
4. On a moderate heat add skinless chicken with a 1 level teaspoon of salt and mix in well
5. Then add 3 tins of chopped tomatoes with a heap teaspoon of sugar, bring to the boil then turn down low and cover
6. Cook for 10 minutes checking the mix - if dry add a little water then cook for another 5 minutes
7. Add the rest of the vegetables then cook for a further 10 minutes
8. Just before serving turn off the heat and add yogurt and mix in well or serve with yogurt on the side
Easy to make and a family favourite at meal times

This recipe uses lean mince to cut down on the fat content. Try to buy lean mince in bulk packs when on ‘special’ and freeze what you don’t need making sure it is well covered or wrapped. Use a lot of fresh or frozen vegetables in mince or meat stewing dishes to bulk them up. It keeps the price of the dish down and the health benefits up. A lot of Kiwis are in the habit of eating far more meat than we need in our diet so add less meat and put in more vegetables. Remember frozen vegetables are very high in vitamins and minerals because the nutrients are frozen in straight from harvesting.

Easy Cottage Pie

Ingredients
(serves family of 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>5 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good oil e.g. canola or soybean</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion – chopped</td>
<td>1 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic – crushed or chopped</td>
<td>3 cloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean mince</td>
<td>750 grams, about 3 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain flour</td>
<td>1 heaped tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen mixed vegetables of your choice</td>
<td>500g mixed/ 2 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trim milk</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grated cheese (optional)</td>
<td>sprinkling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method

1. Peel and chop potatoes and boil for mash topping
2. Meanwhile in a large frying pan heat oil
3. Turn the heat down
4. Add chopped onions and gently fry until transparent
5. Add garlic and continue to cook for 1 minute
6. Add mince with a pinch of salt and some pepper and cook until browned (you will have to break the mince up into pieces using a wooden spoon as you cook)
7. Once brown, sprinkle with plain flour over the mince to thicken the juices and mix through
8. Then add quarter of a cup of water
9. Add vegetables to the mince
10. Mix mince and vegetables together and place in a 2 litre dish
11. Once potatoes are cooked, mash with 1 tablespoon and about ½ cup milk then add salt and pepper to taste
12. Place mashed potato over mince pressing down with a fork
13. Grated Edam cheese which has 25% less fat may be added on the top
14. Bake at 170oC for 30 minutes then serve

Tip!
Start with boiling the potatoes as these will take the longest to cook.
Comforting on a cold winter evening

Chicken skin is high in bad cholesterol. Some would say the skin is the best part however our hearts would not agree. It is true that cooking the chicken with the skin on protects the chicken from the heat of the pan when cooking. But are you strong-willed enough to take the skin off once it’s cooked and not eat it? If not, take care of your heart and remove the fat and skin before cooking. The tomato juices/cooking liquor from casseroling or braising will add moisture back into the chicken. With slow cooking your meal will be tender, tasty and healthy.

Italian Chicken Casserole

Ingredients
(serves family of 5 or halve the ingredients for 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicken pieces, drums or thighs</td>
<td>1kg remove fat and skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paprika powder</td>
<td>1 heaped tablespoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good oil e.g. canola or soybean</td>
<td>3 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions – sliced</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic – finely chopped</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celery – pick the leaves off then chop</td>
<td>2 stalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capsicums – thinly sliced</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mushrooms – chopped</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White wine</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned tomatoes</td>
<td>1 tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned tomato puree</td>
<td>1 tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsley and/or basil and/or oregano</td>
<td>1 teaspoon each dried (if using fresh, use lots!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta</td>
<td>2 cups uncooked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method

1. Sprinkle chicken with paprika powder and a little bit of pepper
2. Heat frying pan, add the oil and brown all of the chicken until there is a nice colour on each side, then place the chicken in a roasting tray
3. Add onions, garlic, celery, capsicums and then mushrooms to frying pan controlling the heat and cook for about 5 minutes
4. Add the white wine to deglaze the pan
5. Add the tins of tomatoes and puree and the herbs, then bring to the boil
6. Poor this vegetable mix over the chicken, cover with a lid or tin foil then bake at 170°C for 45 minutes
7. Place pasta in pot of lots of boiling water 15 minutes before serving
8. Cook pasta for about 14 minutes
9. Serve chicken, vegetables and plenty of sauce over pasta

Tip!
Celery goes limp in the fridge after two or three days. The best way to keep celery or spring onions fresh is to cut in half, wrap well in glad wrap and store in the fridge.

Tip!
Tomatoes are high in lycopene shown to decrease the risk of prostate cancer.
Low cost healthy meal

Tinned tomatoes are low cost, they go a long way, and are very tasty with many health benefits. Pasta is another low cost option and if eaten in moderation is a good healthy meal for you and the family. Lean mince has a lot less fat content than standard mince and when the health benefits are weighed up, evidence shows it makes a good value meal. Mince is good to freeze so look for lean mince when it’s on special, buy extra and freeze in meal size portions.

Tomato pasta and meatballs
(serves family of 4)

Ingredients for tomato sauce
- Good oil, e.g. canola or soybean: 2 tablespoons
- Onion diced: 1 large
- Garlic crushed or chopped: 4 cloves
- Tomatoes chopped: 2 tins
- Carrot grated: 1 small
- Salt & pepper: pinch (optional)
- Basil: 5 leaves or teaspoon dried

Method for tomato sauce
1. Heat oil in a saucepan
2. Add onions then the garlic into pan on medium heat and stir until transparent (about 4 minutes)
3. Remove 4 tablespoons of cooked onions and garlic mix for the meatball mix and put aside in mixing bowl to cool
4. Add the rest of the ingredients, bring to the boil then simmer on low for 15-20 minutes

Ingredients for meatballs
- Lean mince: 400 grams
- Eggs: 2
- Salt & pepper: pinch (optional)
- Rosemary dried or fresh: 1 teaspoon
- Garlic and onion mix: saved from tomato sauce

Method for meatballs & pasta
1. Mix all the ingredients together well and roll into golf ball sized balls
2. Place meatballs in hot non-stick frying pan on medium heat (if frying pan is not non-stick heat and add 1 tablespoon of oil first)
3. Cook meatballs carefully turning gently when needed for about 15 minutes
4. At the same time add 1½ cups of pasta to pot of boiling water then stir
5. Cook pasta for about 12 minutes
6. Drain the pasta and add the tomato sauce, gently mix and cook for 1 more minute on low heat
7. Serve meatballs on top of pasta and tomato sauce with a teaspoon of grated parmesan cheese

Tip!
Whenever cooking pasta use lots of boiling water – 7 cups of water to 1 cup of pasta.
Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA) is a Ministry of Health campaign to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. It is a joint approach between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC).

For an easy to use website with more HEHA information, visit www.bopdhb.govt.nz and click on the HEHA logo.

Whether are you just getting started or you want to find out more about healthy living, the websites below are full of great evidence-based information, so check them out today!

Sport Bay of Plenty www.sportbop.co.nz

Sport and Recreation New Zealand www.sparc.org.nz

Heart Foundation www.nhf.org.nz

Feeding our Futures www.feedingourfutures.org.nz

Live Smart www.livesmart.co.nz

Ministry of Health www.moh.govt.nz