

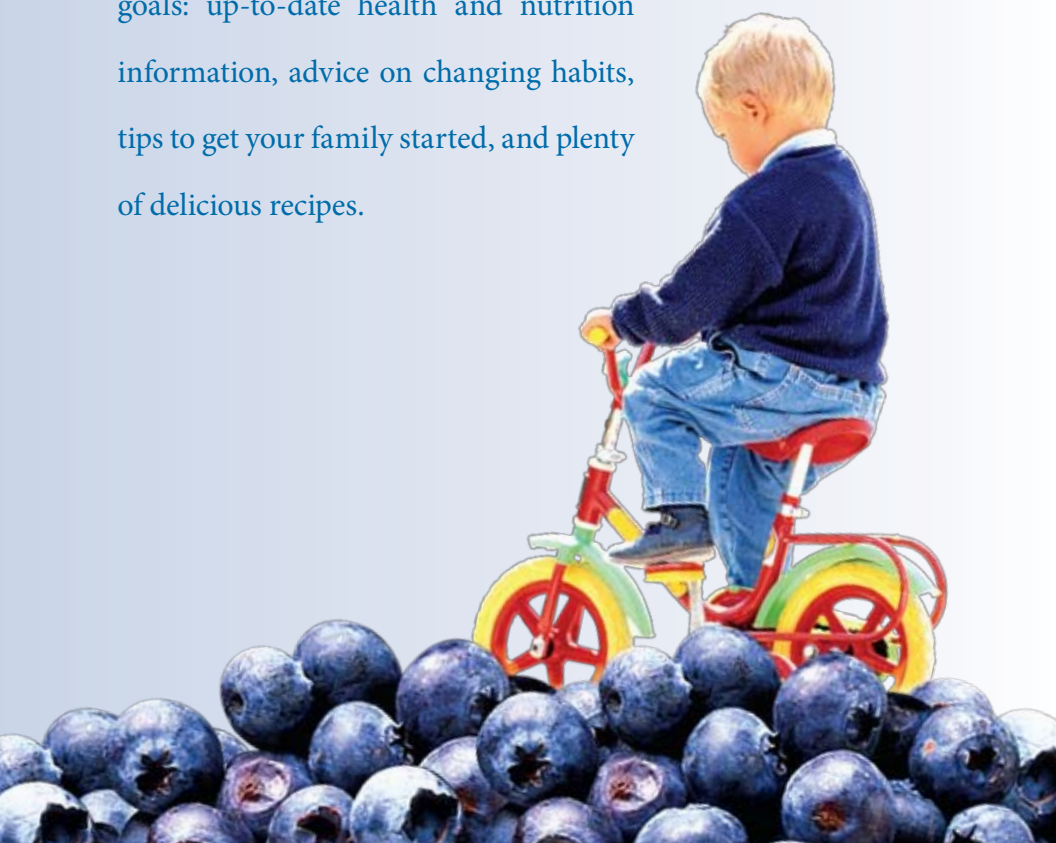
Nutrition for Kids



A Dietary Approach to Lifelong Health



Parents know that the road to lifelong good health starts with healthy eating and plenty of exercise. Getting kids and families started down this path is easy with a little assistance. In this guide you will find the tools you and your family need to achieve many of your health goals: up-to-date health and nutrition information, advice on changing habits, tips to get your family started, and plenty of delicious recipes.



Weighing In on Health



People who maintain a healthy weight throughout life stay well and live longer than those who are overweight. The lifestyle habits that help keep us slim—exercise and a healthy diet—also cut our risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.

The prevalence of obesity among our nation's youth has more than doubled in the past 20 years, with close to 5 million youths aged 6 to 17 seriously overweight or obese. The concerns caused by overweight are more than a cosmetic issue. Childhood obesity leads to a variety of health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently found that 60 percent of overweight 5- to 10-year-olds already have at least one risk factor for heart disease, such as raised blood pressure or insulin levels.²

Many adolescent boys and girls in the United States are currently trying to lose weight (36 and 44 percent, re-

spectively). One-fourth to one-third of dieting adolescents practice unhealthy or even dangerous diets.³ In a study of 5- to 12-year-olds, 45 percent of the girls and 20 percent of the boys reported having been on a diet.⁴ Cutting calories dramatically is often effective at lowering weight for the short term, but this usually results in overeating or binge eating and regaining of any lost weight. High-protein, low-carbohydrate, and very low calorie diets are not safe for children or teens.

Instead, children (and adults) merely need to switch to healthy foods. When the diet is built from fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes, weight management is much easier, and putting limits on calories is unnecessary. For



Food	Calories	Fat (g)	Fiber (g)
Veggie Burger	264	0.5	8
Hamburger	444	21	2
Homemade Bean Burrito	255	2	12
Fast-food Chili-Cheese Burrito	390	18	4

example, a veggie burger has 0.5 grams of fat, saving 20 grams of fat and 180 calories (compared with a hamburger at 21 grams of fat and 444 calories). A homemade bean burrito with lettuce, tomato, and salsa has 2 grams of fat, saving 16 grams of fat and 135 calories (compared with a fast food chili cheese burrito with 18 grams of fat and 390

calories). It's easy to make the switch and well worth the time.

The bottom line is that it is always the right time to adopt a healthful diet. It is important to help all children, regardless of body size, choose a healthy eating style and incorporate fun physical activity into their lives now and in the future.

FOOD CHOICES FOR ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Choosing a plant-based eating style is a simple way to achieve or maintain a healthy weight because such dietary patterns require no calorie counting and contain the nutrients a fit body needs. Vegetarians have been shown to be leaner than their meat-eating peers in a number of scientific studies,^{5,6} and vegetarian diets have also been shown

to be effective in weight loss.⁷

Dr. Benjamin Spock, pediatrician, medical researcher, and teacher, advised in his book, *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care*, that weight-loss programs for children should be based on changing the types of foods children eat rather than the amount of food they eat. He encouraged shifting the entire family



away from oily fried foods, meats, and dairy products and toward low-fat, plant-based foods: grains, pasta, vegetables, legumes, and fruit. When this is done, he stated, “weight loss typically occurs without anyone going hungry.”^{6,8} This is the key to lifelong weight maintenance. The scientific evidence is clear: The closer a family gets to a pure vegetarian diet, the healthier and leaner they’ll be.

Here are some ideas for making the switch:

- Identify three or four vegetarian recipes your family already enjoys. Examples include bean burritos, pasta with marinara sauce, vegetable stir-fries, and vegetable soup. Next, think of three or four more frequently prepared meals that can be easily adapted. For example, chili can be made vegetarian with beans, and other favorites, such as sloppy joes and tacos, can be made with texturized vegetable protein.
- Experiment and broaden food options. Try new foods, recipes, and places to eat to keep it interesting and enjoyable. Sometimes, when people change

their food intake because of concerns about health, body size, or personal beliefs, they focus too narrowly on just a small number of foods. Exploring the broad range of healthful foods now available makes a menu change fun, nutritious, and sustainable.

- Choose low-fat, healthful options whenever possible. Choosing lower fat recipes and foods and eating a variety of colors are good ways to ensure that your child’s diet is a healthy one. For example, oven-roasted potatoes should be chosen over French fries, pasta with marinara sauce is a better option than spaghetti with meatballs, and fruit sorbet is just as refreshing but much more healthful than ice cream. The net effect (not easily detected) is usually a reduction in the number of calories and fat consumed in any given portion of food. Plus, the introduction of new foods adjusts the taste buds and develops an appreciation for good, wholesome food.
- It’s best to avoid foods and beverages that have lots of calories but few or no nutrients, such as candy, soda, punch, cookies, and fried snack foods. Fatty condiments like creamy salad dressings, mayonnaise, butter, and margarine are best left off the plate. Instead of centering meals around fatty meats and cheese, meals should be built from the New Four Food Groups: healthy grains, legumes, fruit, and vegetables.

THE NEW FOUR FOOD GROUPS

Plan menus using the New Four Food Groups: whole grains, vegetables, legumes, and fruit. Nutritious diets built from these food groups help children improve their overall well-being, maintain a healthy weight, and reduce their risk of illnesses that can arrive later in life. See suggested servings in the daily meal planning table on page 6.

WHOLE GRAINS

Grains are rich in fiber and other complex carbohydrates, as well as protein, B vitamins, and zinc.

- Whole grains include breads, hot and cold cereals, pasta, cooked grains such as rice and barley, and crackers.
- One serving equals 1/2 cup of pasta, grains, or cooked cereal; 3/4 to 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal; 1/2 bun or bagel; or 1 slice of bread.

VEGETABLES

Vegetables are packed with vitamin C, beta-carotene, riboflavin, iron, calcium, fiber, and other nutrients.

- “Dark green vegetables” include broccoli, kale, spinach, and collards, turnip greens, mustard greens, beet greens, bok choy, and Swiss chard.
- “Other vegetables” refers to all other vegetables, fresh or frozen, raw or cooked.

- One serving of vegetables equals 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw (unless an amount is specified in the table on page 6).

LEGUMES, NUTS, SEEDS, AND NON-DAIRY MILKS

Legumes, nuts, seeds, and non-dairy milks are all good sources of protein, iron, calcium, zinc, and B vitamins. Legumes are great sources of fiber.

- Legumes include beans, such as pinto, navy, kidney, and garbanzo; lentils, black-eyed or split peas; and products made from soybeans, such as tofu, veggie burgers, soy “hot dogs” or sandwich slices, and tempeh, a hearty fermented soy product that can be used in place of meat in many recipes.
- One serving of legumes equals 1/2 cup of beans, tofu, or other item (unless an amount is specified).
- Non-dairy milks include breast milk and soy formula for infants and toddlers, and rice-, soy-, and other vegetable-based milks for children at least one year of age. Choose fortified soymilk, whenever possible, or use other fortified, plant-based milks such as rice, almond, or oat milk.
- One serving of non-dairy milk equals one cup.
- Nuts include whole or chopped nuts, nut butters, whole seeds, and seed butters.
- One to two servings of nuts may be

SAMPLE MENUS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Breakfast: Oatmeal with applesauce, calcium-fortified orange juice
Lunch: Alphabet Soup*, whole-grain crackers, carrot sticks, banana, soymilk
Dinner: Pita Pizzas*, fresh cucumber, cherry tomatoes
Snacks: Peach, granola or energy bar, soymilk

Breakfast: Whole-grain cereal with strawberries and soymilk
Lunch: Hummus sandwich on whole-wheat bread with lettuce and tomato, apple juice, orange wedges, carrot sticks
Dinner: Baked veggie nuggets, simply delicious winter squash*, roasted sweet potato wedges*, soymilk, fruit salad
Snacks: Graham crackers, banana

Breakfast: Granola topped with soy yogurt, blueberries, and almonds; calcium-fortified orange juice
Lunch: Curly pasta salad*, green salad, whole-wheat bread, apple
Dinner: Chili Mac*, green beans, cucumber salad
Snacks: Popcorn, trail mix, strawberries

Breakfast: Bagel with peanut butter and banana, calcium-fortified orange juice
Lunch: Veggies in a blanket*, pretzels, apple
Dinner: Bean burrito with lettuce, tomato, and guacamole; rice; baked tortilla chips and salsa; peach; soymilk
Snacks: Hummus and crackers, strawberry smoothie*

* See delicious recipes starting on page 14

included in a healthy diet, but they are optional. One serving of nuts or nut butters equals 1 tablespoon.

FRUITS

Fruits are rich in fiber, vitamin C, and beta-carotene. Be sure to include at least one serving each day of fruits

that are high in vitamin C—citrus fruits, melons, and strawberries are all good choices.

- Fruits include all fruits, fresh or frozen, raw or cooked, and fruit juices.
- One serving equals 1/2 cup cooked fruit, 1/2 cup fruit juice, 1/4 cup dried fruit, or 1 piece of whole fruit.

DAILY MEAL PLANNING FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Planning meals based on the New Four Food Groups is easy and helps ensure growing kids get the important nutrients they need. Caloric needs vary from child to child. The following guidelines are general ones.

1- to 4-Year-Olds	5- to 6-Year-Olds	7- to 12-Year-Olds	13- to 19-Year-Olds
Whole Grains, Breads, Cereals			
4 servings	6 servings	7 servings	10 servings
Vegetables			
2 to 4 tbsp dark green vegetables 1/4 to 1/2 cup other vegetables	1/4 cup dark green vegetables 1/4 to 1/2 cup other vegetables	1 serving dark green vegetables 3 servings other vegetables	2 servings dark green vegetables 3 servings other vegetables
Legumes, Nuts, Seeds, Non-Dairy Milks			
1/4 to 1/2 cup legumes	1/2 to 1 cup legumes 3 servings soymilk or other non-dairy milk	2 servings legumes 3 servings soymilk or other non-dairy milk	3 servings legumes 2 to 3 servings soymilk or other non-dairy milk
Fruits			
3/4 to 1 1/2 cups	1 to 2 cups	3 servings	4 servings

Be sure to include a source of vitamin B12, such as any typical children's multivitamin or vitamin-fortified cereals or soymilk.



KID CLASSICS

Being vegetarian doesn't mean having to give up classic kid fare. While whole, unprocessed fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes should be chosen first, many of the foods children enjoy can be adapted to fit into a vegetarian menu. Here are some tips:

- **Pizza.** Try ordering pizza without the cheese and pile on the veggies. If making pizza at home, top it off with vegetarian meatballs or veggie pepperoni.
- **Hamburgers and Hot Dogs.** Both come in a wide variety of veggie versions. You can microwave them, bake them, grill them, and top them with everything you traditionally enjoy, including soy cheese.
- **Cold Cut Sandwiches.** Even the cold cut now has a non-meat alternative. Try a slice of veggie ham, veggie turkey, or veggie salami topped with lettuce and tomato and a thin layer of mustard or vegan mayonnaise between slices of whole-wheat bread.
- **Chicken Nuggets and Buffalo Wings.** Several companies offer these traditional favorites in veggie form (look in the frozen food section of the supermarket). Just add ketchup or barbecue sauce.
- **Ice Cream.** Soy ice cream is a terrific non-dairy alternative that comes in a variety of styles and flavors. For a twist, add frozen fruit and a little

soymilk to vanilla soy ice cream, and blend to make a smoothie. A scoop of fruit sorbet—found at many of the large ice cream chains or at the grocery store—is also a refreshing treat on a hot summer day.

- **Fast Food.** Burger King now offers a terrific veggie burger. Other food chains, such as Subway, also offer vegetarian sandwiches, and Taco Bell makes a bean burrito (just ask them to hold the cheese).

KEEPING KIDS MOVING

Fitness has four dimensions: cardiovascular, strength, flexibility, and body composition. Activities that get the heart pumping, such as running, swimming, bicycling, aerobics, and playing sports or outdoor neighborhood games, improve cardiovascular fitness. Strength-training activities, such as weightlifting, push-ups, and sit-ups, as well as many daily tasks, such as digging in the garden, lifting boxes, carpentry work, and so forth, improve muscular development and bone strength. Stretching, yoga, gymnastics, dancing, and martial arts all promote flexibility.

A healthy body composition balances muscle and other lean tissue with an appropriate amount of fat tissue for a child's age and sex. Healthy body compositions are achieved through a combination of an active lifestyle and a healthy menu of grains, vegetables,

HEALTHY SNACKS

Young children have high calorie and nutrient needs but their stomachs are small. Teenagers also often have high energy needs combined with busy schedules. Keep delicious, healthy snack choices on hand both at home and in the lunchbox.

SNACKING ON THE NEW FOUR FOOD GROUPS

Whole Grains, Breads, Cereals

Pita chips, pretzels, whole-grain crackers, granola, whole-grain cereal, popcorn, energy bars, granola bars

Vegetables

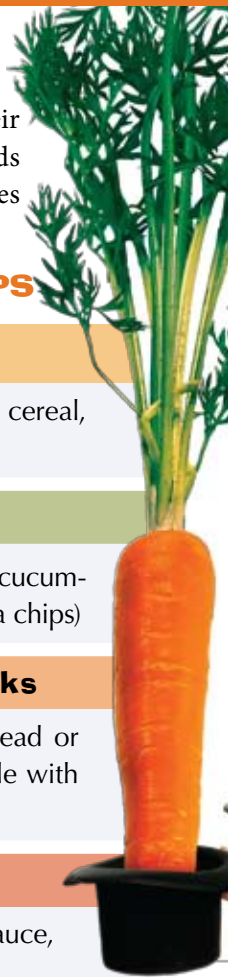
Baby carrots, celery stalks (try with peanut butter and raisins), cucumber, carrots, tomato with non-dairy dressing, salsa (try with pita chips)

Legumes, Nuts, Seeds, Non-Dairy Milks

Hummus (try on carrots or crackers), nut butters (put on bread or fruit), edamame (whole cooked soybeans), soy yogurt (sprinkle with granola), soymilk, rice milk, almond milk

Fruits

Fortified orange juice, whole fresh fruits, dried fruit, applesauce, fruit cups, frozen grapes or banana slices



legumes, and fruit.

Find ways to incorporate fun physical activity into your family activities daily. Kids need to be engaged in active pursuits for at least an hour each day.

ALREADY OVER-WEIGHT CHILDREN

Just as with slim children, it is always the right time to adopt a healthy

diet. Keep in mind that the two main contributors to overweight are low activity level and diets based on meat, dairy products, and high-calorie, low-nutrient foods. The first step toward health is assessing a family's lifestyle by looking at eating patterns and activities to determine what changes are needed to promote fitness and achieve a healthy weight. The easiest and most

effective method is for all members of the family to shift together—if possible—to a healthier lifestyle. The same healthy habits will benefit the rest of the family as well as the overweight child.

Focusing on overall health is a better choice than embarking on a low-calorie diet for achieving fitness and a healthy weight. The idea is to focus on the quality of what is being eaten, not so much on the quantity. The healthiest diet avoids animal products completely and is built from grains, legumes, veg-

etables, and fruit. Plan menus using the New Four Food Groups (see page 4).

LEARNING TO EAT WELL

- Limit the quantities of highly processed foods and sugary beverages (otherwise known as “empty-calorie” foods) and help children understand reasonable portion sizes. Under most circumstances, restricting the calorie intake of children is not recommended. Children continue to grow and develop into their early twenties, so they can’t afford to short change nutrients. However, switching out the empty-calorie foods with healthy options ensures growing kids get everything they need—except the excess calories!
- Children and adults can benefit from learning to listen to their natural hunger and fullness cues, rather than focusing on “cleaning their plates.” Help children learn to pay attention to natural internal signals to keep from overeating. If a child does not want to finish his or her meal now, the plate can be wrapped and saved for when the child is hungry later. Promising dessert as a reward is best avoided as well, as it encourages overeating and makes less healthful foods seem special.
- Teach children the value of good nutrition. Parents, guardians, and teachers can work with children toward an understanding that food is a fuel for health and fitness rather than a com-

Healthy body compositions are achieved through a combination of an active lifestyle and a healthy menu of grains, vegetables, legumes, and fruit.






fort, friend, enemy, or boredom reliever. Reading books to children that present nutrition in a fun and interesting manner is also a good educational method.

- Get kids engaged in the food procurement and preparation process. Gardening; picking berries, apples, or other produce at you-pick farms; or visiting the local farmers market or fruit stand can spark an interest in healthy foods. Invite them also to participate in menu planning, as well as cooking. Even very small children can help stir cold or room temperature items, or wash produce, or pour ingredients. These simple experiential lessons will often go a long way to promoting healthy eating habits.

FITTING IN FUN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- Encourage children to play with other children and to do active things with family members. Most communities have locally organized activity programs after school, on the weekends, and during the summer. Since gym class and team sports are not every child's cup of tea, encouraging individual interests such as ice skating, ballet dancing, or skateboarding are important, too.
- It's important for parents to talk with children about their activity patterns. Children should be active for at least 60 minutes on most days. Sedentary activities, such as TV watching





and computer time, should be limited except when homework requires it. It is estimated that, on average, U.S. preschoolers spend 23 hours a week in front of the television and grade-school students watch for 29 hours each week. Add to this the time spent playing video games, using the Internet, doing homework, and eating dinner—and many kids spend a lot of time sitting still.

Encouraging children to adopt a healthy, vegetarian eating style and teaching them to enjoy being active are likely the most important lessons children can learn for their long-term health.

SURVIVING THE SCHOOL LUNCH LINE

Families can also help to improve “get healthy” opportunities for children in schools. Many schools are under financial pressure to downsize health and physical education programs, so health-conscious families should support school districts in their efforts to promote wellness and physical education and to promote healthier lunches in the cafeteria. School lunch programs are required to provide nutritious, low-cost meals to students; parents and teachers can help school officials under-

stand what options should be available for children.

Here are some suggestions for improving the healthfulness of foods eaten in schools:

- Pack a lunch. Bean and pasta salads, grilled tofu, burritos, and sandwiches make great lunches and are easy to pack. Last night’s leftovers are also a great, simple choice. Make sure to include several healthy snacks.
- Encourage your child to request that low-fat, vegetarian entrées be placed on the lunch line. Demand for these items will encourage the food service to incorporate healthier foods into their menu cycle.
- Parents can also volunteer their time. Get involved with the PTA or directly with the food service. Work with them to help incorporate healthier foods. Some parents have even donated recipes or planned healthy snack breaks in the classroom.

See www.HealthySchoolLunches.org for more information.

STAYING CLEAR OF THE “FOOD FIGHT”

Children learn very early that what they eat is important to their parents, and they often use this knowledge to their advantage. Parents may sit for hours at the dinner table with their children until they finish their last asparagus spear. Food can be used as a reward, a way to exert control, or a

way to rebel. Rewarding kids for good grades or good behavior with sweets can set up internal conflicts about food. This is especially true if the rewards are in opposition to current goals for health or body image. If not dealt with early, these “food fights” may extend into adult life as well.

Finding a way to sidestep the “food fight” is a priority. If a child is having trouble sticking to healthful foods, the following strategies may be helpful.

- Stock the kitchen with healthy foods. Having plenty of fruits, vegetables, grains, and beans on hand and keeping unhealthy foods out of the house are simple ways to eliminate conflict over which type of food to prepare or eat.
- Focus on food as a fuel for health. Choosing a simple, health-giving way of eating like the one suggested in these pages and explaining to children why it is important to eat this way will help them to appreciate and choose healthful foods.
- Reduce the emphasis on food in daily life. When people solve problems by eating or congratulate themselves with food, the importance of food has gotten out of control. Finding other solutions to problems, such as talking about them, writing about them in a journal, or taking a walk or a bike ride to figure out possible steps to take, are much healthier and more productive. Families should become accustomed

to using non-food treats as rewards, such as a warm conversation, reading, going to a movie or the park, making something, calling Grandma or a friend, or engaging in physical activities.

- Set clear divisions of responsibility. If a “food fight” develops, parents should define responsibilities around foods. The parent is responsible for providing appropriate food choices. The child is responsible for choosing what to eat among the choices offered.
- Allow for healthy treats. Fresh-fruit smoothies, a colorful cup of berries in season, or a vegetable dish prepared a favorite way can all be special treats and prevent a family from feeling deprived.

STICKING WITH IT

The ease with which kids transition into and stick with this healthy dietary pattern can be positively influenced by a variety of factors. Family support, in terms of providing healthy foods and setting a good example, as well as education about nutrition, are key. If your children have convictions about the welfare of animals or reducing the impact on the environment and/or have a clear understanding of the health value of good eating habits, they will be more likely to make the switch easily and be able to maintain this diet, not only while away from home, but throughout their lives.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITES:

PCRM's Healthy Kids
Campaign site:
www.KidsGetHealthy.org

Our main site for general
information about healthy
eating and our campaigns:
www.PCRM.org

PCRM's Healthy School
Lunch Campaign site:
www.HealthySchoolLunches.org

The PCRM Marketplace Online for
information on our book,
Healthy Eating for Life for Children:
pcrm.org.shop

**FOR NUTRITION TIPS AND RECIPES FOR ALL AGE
GROUPS, VISIT WWW.NUTRITIONMD.ORG**



When children
eat healthful foods
and stay physically
active, their bodies
find their way to
a healthy size
and shape in a
pleasurable and
sustainable way.

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RECIPES

These recipes and more are available on the PCRM Web site. Please visit www.PCRM.org/health/recipes for more healthy options.

Alphabet Soup *(Makes about 2 quarts)*

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 quart tomato juice
1 small potato, scrubbed and cut into chunks
1 carrot, cut into chunks
1 stalk celery, sliced, including top
2 teaspoons Italian herbs
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 cup alphabet pasta or small pasta shells
1 cup finely chopped spinach, kale, or collard greens
1 15-ounce can kidney beans, including liquid

- Heat oil in a large pot and add onion and garlic. Cook over medium high heat until onion is soft, about 5 minutes.
- Add tomato juice, potato, carrot, celery, Italian herbs, and black pepper. Cover and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes.
- Add pasta, chopped greens, and kidney beans. Simmer until greens and pasta are tender, about 15 minutes. Extra tomato juice or water may be added if a thinner soup is desired.

Nutrition information per 1-cup serving: 128 calories; 5 g protein; 25 g carbohydrate; 1.5 g fat; 6 g fiber; 203 mg sodium; calories from protein: 16%; calories from carbohydrates: 74%; calories from fats: 10%.

Roasted Sweet Potato Wedges

(Makes 4 servings)

2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into wedges
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
vegetable oil spray

- Preheat oven to 450°F.
- Combine sweet potatoes, cinnamon, salt, cumin, black pepper, and garlic powder in a plastic bag. Seal and shake. Place sweet potatoes on a baking sheet (do not overlap) coated with vegetable oil spray. Bake for 20 minutes or until very tender, flipping potatoes once during cooking.

Nutrition information per serving (1/4 of recipe): 53 calories; 0.1 g fat; 0 g saturated fat; 2.1% calories from fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 1.2 g protein; 12.1 g total carbohydrates; 4.8 g sugar; 2 g fiber; 106 mg sodium; 24 mg calcium; 0.5 mg iron; 11.3 mg vitamin C; 6561 mcg beta-carotene; 0.4 mg vitamin E.





Chili Mac (Serves 6)

Kids of all ages love this easy-to-make meal.

- 8 ounces pasta spirals or macaroni
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2–3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 small bell pepper, diced
- 3/4 cup textured vegetable protein
- 1 15-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, including liquid
- 1 15-ounce can corn, including liquid
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin

- Cook the pasta in boiling water until it is tender. Drain and rinse it under hot water, then set it aside.
- Heat 1/2 cup of water in a large pot, then add the chopped onion and garlic. Cook until the onion is soft, about 3 minutes.
- Add the bell pepper, textured vegetable protein, crushed tomatoes, kidney beans, corn, spices, and an additional 1/2 cup of water. Stir to mix, then simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.
- Add the cooked pasta and check the seasonings. Add more chili powder if a spicier dish is desired.

Tips:

- Textured vegetable protein is made from soybeans and is low in fat and high in pro-

tein. Look for it in natural food stores and some supermarkets.

- Pinto beans or black beans may be substituted for the kidney beans.
- Substituting fresh sweet corn cut off the cob for the canned corn takes a little more time but adds a deliciously sweet flavor to this meal.

Nutrition information per 1-cup serving: 92 calories; 2 g protein; 19 g carbohydrate; 1 g fat; 102 mg sodium; 0 mg cholesterol; calories from protein: 9%; calories from carbohydrates: 81%; calories from fats: 10%.

Curly Pasta Salad (Serves 6 to 8)

Make early to allow flavors to blend.

- 1 12-ounce package dry rainbow rotini pasta
- 1 16-ounce package frozen chopped broccoli and cauliflower, thawed completely
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 1 2-ounce jar chopped pimentos
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 cup fat-free honey-Dijon salad dressing
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 dash Tabasco sauce (optional)

- Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and rinse under cool water.
- Place pasta in a large bowl. Add broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms, green onions, pimentos, and tomatoes.
- In a small bowl, mix honey-Dijon dressing and soy sauce. Pour over salad and toss to mix well. Season with black pepper and Tabasco sauce, if using. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving.

Nutrition information per serving (1/6 of recipe): 304 calories; 1.4 g fat; 0.2 g saturated fat; 4.1% calories from fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 10 g protein; 63.3 g total carbohydrates; 9.5 g sugar; 6.9 g fiber; 735 mg sodium; 40 mg calcium; 3.3 mg iron; 37.9 mg vitamin C; 498 mcg beta-carotene; 0.8 mg vitamin E.

Veggies in a Blanket

(Makes 40 individual pieces)

8 flour tortillas

½ cup vegan cream cheese or hummus

4 grated carrots

8 lettuce leaves (or a couple handfuls of baby spinach leaves), or 1 container sprouts

- Warm tortillas in a dry pan, if desired. Spread vegan cream cheese or hummus on the tortillas. Add carrots and lettuce or spinach. Roll up each tortilla, evenly place 5 toothpicks on each wrap, and slice into 5 individual rolls per tortilla.

Variations: Add thin sticks of cucumber or sweet red pepper before rolling.

Nutrition information per serving (4 pieces): 102 calories; 2 g fat; 0.3 g saturated fat; 18% calories from fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 3.8 g protein; 18.6 g carbohydrate; 1.5 g sugar; 3.7 g fiber; 203 mg sodium; 27 mg calcium; 1.2 mg iron; 2.1 mg vitamin C; 1424 mcg beta-carotene; 0.4 mg vitamin E.

Pita Pizzas (Makes 6 pizzas)

Whole wheat pita bread makes a perfect crust for a child-size pizza and children enjoy assembling them once the vegetables have been chopped. In addition to the toppings listed, you could also add fat-free vegetarian pepperoni slices. YvesVeggie Pepperoni and Smart Deli Thin Slices Lightlife are two delicious options.

1 15-ounce can tomato sauce

1 6-ounce can tomato paste

1 teaspoon garlic granules or powder

½ teaspoon each: basil, oregano, and thyme

2 green onions, thinly sliced

1 red bell pepper, diced

1 cup chopped mushrooms

6 pieces of whole wheat pita bread

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Combine tomato sauce, tomato paste, garlic granules and herbs. Prepare vegetables as directed.

- Turn a piece of pita bread upside down and spread with 2 to 3 tablespoons of sauce. Top with chopped vegetables. Repeat with remaining pita breads. Arrange on a bak-

ing sheet and bake until edges are lightly browned, about 10 minutes.

Note: You will only use about half the sauce. Refrigerate or freeze the remainder for use at another time.

Nutrition information per pizza: 153 calories; 6 g protein; 32 g carbohydrate; 1 g fat; 5 g fiber; 567 mg sodium; calories from protein: 14%; calories from carbohydrates: 78%; calories from fats: 8%.

Simply Delicious Winter Squash

(Makes 4 servings)

This is a great recipe for preparing butternut squash because it's quick, easy, and absolutely delicious!

1 small butternut squash (about 4 cups diced)

1/2–1 cup water

2 teaspoon lite soy sauce

1 tablespoon maple syrup

Peel the squash, then cut it in half and remove the seeds. Cut the squash into 1-inch cubes (you should have about 4 cups).

- Place into a pot with the water, soy sauce, and maple syrup.

- Cover and simmer over medium heat until the squash is fork tender, about 15 minutes.

Nutrition information per 1-cup serving: 92 calories; 2 g protein; 19 g carbohydrate; 1 g fat; 102 mg sodium; 0 mg cholesterol; calories from protein: 9%; calories from carbohydrates: 81%; calories from fats: 10%.



Apple Crisp (Serves 12)

4 large tart apples
3/4 cup sugar or other sweetener, divided
1/2 cup flour, divided
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 1/2 cups rolled oats
1/3 cup non-dairy (soy) margarine

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Peel the apples, if desired, then core and slice them thinly. Toss with 1/2 cup sweetener, 1 tablespoon flour, and cinnamon. Spread evenly in a 9x13-inch baking dish.
- Mix the rolled oats with the remaining flour and sweetener. Add the Spectrum Naturals Spread or soy margarine and work the mixture until it is uniformly crumbly. Sprinkle evenly over the fruit.
- Bake for 45 minutes, until lightly browned. Let stand 10 minutes before serving

Nutrition information per serving (1/12th of cake): 228 calories; 3 g protein; 46 g carbohydrate; 5 g fat; 4 g fiber; 300 mg sodium; calories from protein: 6%; calories from carbohydrates: 75%; calories from fats: 19%.



Strawberry Smoothie

(Makes about 2 1-cup servings)

1 cup frozen strawberries
1 cup frozen banana chunks
1/2–1 cup unsweetened apple juice

- Place all ingredients in a blender and process on high speed until smooth, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping blender occasionally to move unblended fruit to the center with a spatula. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per 1-cup serving: 121 calories; 3 g protein; 31 g carbohydrate; 0.4 g fat; 2 g fiber; 8 mg sodium; calories from protein: 3%; calories from carbohydrates: 94%; calories from fats: 3%.

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