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Altering Recipes for Good Health

As we start out a new year, let's start by making healthy changes to recipes for good health. While not all recipes are good candidates for alterations, some are perfectly fine. Recipes for most baked products can be changed with little difference in the outcome of the product. However, recipes for preserved products such as pickles, salsa, jellies or candies should not be changed at all.

Modifying a recipe will more than likely produce results that are slightly different than what you are use to, but may be worth it for less calories and fat.

Examples might be a difference in texture, appearance, or richness of flavor. It may take some trial and error to find the right balance.

Along with changing our recipes, we can change our eating habits to follow the recommendations made by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* by taking the following actions:

- * Emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products;
- * Include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and
- * Keep it low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

Here are some ways to cut back in your recipes:

Reduce sugar by one-third.

For example, if a recipe says to use 1 cup sugar, use $\frac{2}{3}$ cup. This works best when using canned and frozen fruits and in making puddings and custards. In cookies and cakes, try using $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar per cup of flour. For quick breads and muffins, use 1 tablespoon sugar per cup of flour. To enhance the flavor when sugar is reduced, add vanilla, cinnamon, or nutmeg.

Reduce fat by one-third.

For example, if a recipe calls for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fat, use $\frac{1}{3}$ cup. This method works best in gravies, sauces, puddings, and some cookies. For cakes and quick breads, use 2 tablespoons fat per cup of flour.

Omit Salt or reduce by one-half.

If a recipe calls for $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, use $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon. This method may be more acceptable if you gradually reduce the amount of salt each time you make the recipe. Herbs, spices, or salt-

free seasoning mixes can also be used as flavor enhancers. Do not eliminate salt from yeast bread or rolls; it is essential for flavor and helps the texture.

By making these changes, you will eat less fat, sugar, salt, and eat more fiber. These will add up to better health in 2009!

Information provided by: Mary Claire Kinney Bielamowicz, PhD, MS, RD, LD, CFCS, Regents Fellow, Professor and Nutrition Specialists, Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Texas Two-Step Chicken

4 boneless chicken breast halves
1 1/2 cups Picante Sauce
3 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
3 cups cooked brown rice

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place chicken in 2-quart shallow baking dish. Mix picante sauce, sugar, and mustard. Pour over chicken. Bake in oven for 20 minutes or until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. Serve chicken with rice.

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