taster recipes

easy ideas for tasty, healthier meals

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it's good to be food smart

When it comes to our food, we all like it to be cheap, easy and tasty. And that often means ready-made foods, snacks and takeaways.

But if you looked inside some of these foods, you'd discover lots of hidden nasties like salt, sugar and fat. We all need to make sure we don't have too much of these in our diets.

The good news is that we don't have to stop enjoying our family favourites. Finding tasty and healthier alternatives is easy. And it's often cheaper (not to mention tastier) to make your own! You just need to be a bit food smart. Use our easy meal ideas, handy hints and tips and you'll be right on track.

5 A DAY

Eating enough fruit and veg is really important for our health, as they are good sources of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Aim for a variety of 5 A DAY, but remember, they don't all have to be fresh. Frozen, juiced, dried or canned – it all counts!

sugar swaps

We'd never eat straight from the sugar bowl... but some food and drinks are so loaded with the sweet stuff you might as well! So next time, try a sugar swap. Swap sugary drinks for no added sugar drinks like water or skimmed or 1% fat milk. Switch sweet snacks for fruit or unsalted popcorn. And why not replace your sugary puds with plain low-fat yoghurts and fruit?
watch the salt

Many of us don’t realise there’s a lot of hidden salt in the food we buy every day; even in stuff that doesn’t taste that salty, like bread, cereal, pizza and some sauces. It means we’re all eating more salt than we think. So go easy with ketchup, soy sauce and mayonnaise, and skip adding salt next time you tuck in. And when you’re shopping, compare food labels to help choose ones that are lower in salt.

cut back fat

We all know that too much fat is bad for us. But what we don’t realise is how much fat is hidden in many of the foods we eat. The fat that’s really bad for us is saturated fat. That’s the one in things like butter, cheese, pies and fatty meats like streaky bacon and sausages. The good news is it’s easy to be food smart about fat. Choosing lower-fat spreads, lower-fat dairy products, and leaner cuts of meat such as reduced fat sausages are all great ways to start!

be calorie smart

Calories are clues to what you should be eating each day. They’re also really handy for planning how much to eat and when. Try to aim for 400 calories for breakfast, 600 for lunch and 600 for your evening meal (that includes any drinks and desserts you have with your meal too). That leaves a few for any healthy snacks. Use our meal ideas and you’ll be on the right track.

And remember, we don’t all need to eat the same amounts. Women don’t need as many calories as men. And kids need even less. So try to get into the habit of having ‘me-size’ meals.

2000 calories a day for women

2500 calories a day for men

Me-size meals for kids, please
breakfast

A food smart breakfast sets you up for the day ahead. Use these healthier ideas to put a spring in your step and stay full 'til lunch.

easy overnight oats

Preparation Time: 10 mins
Cooking Time: none

Serves: 4 adults
294kcal/1230kJ per portion

ingredients:
150g high-fibre porridge oats
25g dried cranberries
50g ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped
25g sultanas
300ml (1/2 pint) unsweetened apple juice
8 tbsp low-fat natural yoghurt
100g blueberries (fresh or thawed from frozen)
100g raspberries (fresh or thawed from frozen)

what to do:
1. Mix the oats, cranberries, apricots and sultanas in a large bowl. Stir in the apple juice. Cover and pop in the fridge overnight.
2. In the morning, share the mixture between 4 bowls.
3. Spoon 2 tbsp of yoghurt on each serving and share the blueberries and raspberries between each bowl.

Tip: feeling fruity? Swap the berries for sliced banana or chopped apple.
what to do:

1. Preheat the grill. Arrange the lean bacon rashers and halved tomatoes on the grill rack and grill for 5-6 minutes, turning the bacon once.

2. Meanwhile, put the mushrooms into a large frying pan with the water. Heat and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. At the same time, heat the baked beans in a separate saucepan.

3. Heat the vegetable oil in a non-stick frying pan and crack in the eggs. Cook over a medium heat for about 2 minutes until set, then transfer to the grill to set the surface. At this point, remove the grill pan and share the bacon and tomatoes between 4 warm serving plates.

4. Share out the baked beans and mushrooms, then place one egg onto each plate. Serve, seasoned with black pepper.
lunch
Whether you’re sitting down or on the go, let’s be food smart with your midday meal.

hearty homemade soup

Preparation Time: 15 mins
Cooking Time: 30 mins

Serves: 4 adults
271 kcal / 1134 kJ per portion

ingredients:
400g carrots, peeled and chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
900ml (1 1/2 pints) reduced-salt vegetable stock
50g dried red lentils
1/4 tsp ground ginger (optional)
4 tbsp low-fat natural yoghurt
freshly ground black pepper
chopped fresh chives (optional)

what to do:
1. Put the carrots, onion, red pepper, stock, lentils and ginger (if using) into a large saucepan. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat and simmer with a lid half on for 25 minutes, until the vegetables and lentils are tender.
2. Use a liquidizer, food processor, or hand-held stick blender to blend the soup. Reheat and add a little bit of black pepper for seasoning.
3. Spoon the soup into 4 bowls and serve with the yoghurt swirled on top. Add some extra black pepper and, if you’re using them, the chopped chives.
tasty things
to munch at
lunch

beefed up
sarnies

Preparation Time: 15 mins  
Cooking Time: none

Serves: 4 adults  
263kcal/1100kJ per portion

ingredients:

1 carrot, grated
4 lettuce leaves
1 cooked beetroot  
(vacuum packed), grated
1/2 small red onion, 
thinly sliced
2 tsp vinegar
8 medium slices wholemeal  
bread
8 tsp reduced-fat mayonnaise
4 x 30g slices of lean roast beef
freshly ground black pepper

what to do:

1. In a bowl, mix together the carrot, beetroot and red onion with the vinegar. Add a little black pepper.

2. Spread each slice of bread with 1 tsp mayonnaise, then top 4 of them with a slice of roast beef. Share the salad between them, then cover with the remaining bread to make sandwiches. Cut in half and tuck in.
evening meal

Eating with your family is a great way to spend time together. Why not try to all sit down for an evening meal, at least once a week?

burgers with a bite

Preparation Time: 25 mins
Cooking Time: 15 mins

Suitable for freezing

Serves: 4 adults
293kcal/1226kJ per portion

ingredients:

- 450g lean minced pork
- 1 onion, very finely chopped
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1 small courgette, grated
- 1 tsp finely chopped fresh green chilli
- 2 tsp dried mixed herbs
- freshly ground black pepper
- 4 standard wholemeal burger buns, sliced in two
- shredded lettuce and sliced tomatoes
- 1 small gherkin, thinly sliced

what to do:

1. Put the minced pork, onion, carrot, courgette, chilli and herbs in a large bowl. Season with black pepper. Mix thoroughly, then shape the mixture into 4 burgers. Cover and chill, if cooking them later.

2. Preheat the grill or a griddle pan. Grill or griddle the burgers for 12-15 minutes, turning them over halfway, until browned and cooked through.

3. Lightly toast the burger buns. Put some lettuce onto the bun bases, then add the burgers, sliced tomatoes and gherkin, then pop the bun tops in place.

tip: use damp hands to shape your burgers. It stops you getting sticky!
a healthier way to end the day

pasta ratatouille bake

Preparation Time: 20 mins
Cooking Time: 45 mins

Serves: 4 adults
293kcal/1226kJ per portion

ingredients:
200g macaroni (dry weight)
1 tbsp olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tsp fresh or dried oregano
1 tsp fresh or dried basil
4 medium tomatoes, chopped
4 small courgettes, sliced
200g green beans (fresh, frozen or canned)
125ml reduced-salt vegetable stock
25g Parmesan cheese, grated freshly ground black pepper

what to do:
1. Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 4/180°C/ fan oven 160°C.
2. Cook the macaroni according to pack instructions, then drain. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large saucepan and cook the onion and garlic slowly until tender and golden. Stir in the herbs, tomatoes, courgettes, beans and stock. Simmer for 5 minutes.
3. Combine the pasta and vegetables. Season with black pepper. Transfer to a baking dish and sprinkle the cheese on top. Bake for 30-35 minutes.

tip:
use 2 tsp dried mixed herbs instead of the oregano and basil.
easy ways to be food smart all day

Being food smart at breakfast means you'll be less tempted to reach for a mid-morning snack.

- Pick cereals with no added sugar. You can always sweeten it up with a bit of chopped fruit.
- Swap white toast and honey for a banana on wholegrain toast. It'll release enough energy all morning to keep you on the go.
- Having baked beans for brekkie? Go for the ones with reduced sugar and salt.

Perk up a packed lunch with these food smart tips.

- Lower-fat yoghurts always go down well; they're a good source of calcium too.
- It's fun to dunk. Cucumber, pepper and carrot sticks are delicious with a lower-fat dip.
- Use your loaf and make sandwiches with 50/50 bread (half white, half wholemeal or wholegrain). It's healthier than white and tastier, too.
- Tomatoes are tasty! Pop in a handful of the baby ones; kids love them.

If your family raid the cupboards as soon as they get in, try these quick and simple snacks.

- Snacks don't have to be salty! Swap crisps for plain rice cakes, dunked in lower-fat cream cheese.
- Fancy something fizzy? Mix unsweetened fruit juice with sparkling water for a great alternative to sugary fizzy drinks.
- Got a sweet tooth? Forget the cakes or biscuits; fresh fruit is great for munching on the go.

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Meal Mixers available from 7th January 2013. Subject to availability.

Fold

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