

Habits for a Healthy Life



DEBBIE STEPLER

Five or more, What's your score?

By Debbie Stepler

Debbie Stepler, as co-owner of Mercersburg Market, has a special interest in providing healthy options for lunch and meal preparation. In this article, Debbie makes cooking vegetables easy!

Easy Healthy Snacks - Eating a diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables can be just as easy as using canned or processed foods. You can prepare foods ahead of time to help make a quick and healthy snack easier to grab on the go. For example, when washing grapes, divide them into individual serving sizes and place them into containers or baggies, or cut an entire stalk of celery, broccoli or cauliflower and store the extra pieces in a little water in the fridge. These quick snacks offer a low calorie alternative.

Healthier Baking - Here's an easy way to add fruit: When baking, substitute applesauce for the oil in a recipe. The baked dish will be moist and lower in fat. When using this tip, divide the needed amount of oil in half, to determine the amount of applesauce that is needed. For example, if a recipe calls for one-half cup of oil, use one-quarter cup of applesauce.

Easy Veggies - A healthy, easy and quick way to prepare vegetables is to steam them. Place fresh cut up vegetables in a glass bowl with half an inch of water in the bottom. Place a lid on the bowl, and put it in the microwave for several minutes, until the vegetables become tender; overcooking loses nutrients and flavor.

Or - Sauté vegetables for your meal in a healthy oil such as olive oil instead of butter, or use one of the following: low sodium soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, tomato juice, lemon or lime juice. Start with broccoli and cauliflower and carrots, put in some onion and garlic, add mushrooms if you like, and serve over your favorite brown rice or whole grain noodles. Try all sorts of different veggies.

Some of my husband's favorite dishes:

Vegetable Soup

8 cups water
2 cups of tomato juice
2 potatoes, cut in medium sized chunks
2 carrots, sliced
2 zucchini, chopped medium
2-3 tomatoes, chopped
1 c string beans, cut in 1 in. pieces
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 t onion powder
1/4 c tamari, salt reduced
1 t basil
1 t thyme
1/2 t cumin
1/2 t dill weed
1 T parsley flakes
Place the liquids in a large pot. Add chopped vegetables.

Bring to boil. Add seasonings. Simmer over medium-low heat about 45 minutes.

Variation: add one cup cooked brown rice, barley, or broken whole wheat spaghetti. Frozen veggies also work, such as ½ cup peas or corn. For fun add sliced leeks, sliced mushrooms or some chopped spinach in the last 5 minutes of cooking.

Stuffed Sweet Potatoes (Yams)

Medium sweet potato
3 Tablespoons 1% milk
1 Tablespoons blue cheese
2 Tablespoons chopped pecans
½ teaspoon minced garlic
½ teaspoon dried rosemary

Bake or microwave one medium sweet potato. Split potato and scoop out inside, leaving skin intact. In a small bowl, whip potato with milk, blue cheese, pecans, garlic and rosemary. Stuff skin with mixture and serve. Sweet Potatoes have more nutrients than white potatoes.

Carrot Cake

This cake has lots of moisture, but no fat or eggs.
2 cups whole wheat flour
¾ cup honey
1 ¼ cup applesauce
4 teaspoons egg replacer, mixed well with 8 tablespoons of water
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon cloves
½ teaspoon allspice
3 cups grated carrots
1 8 oz can crushed pineapple, slightly drained
½ cup raisins
1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients together. Add the honey, applesauce and mixed egg replacer. Mix well. Add carrots, pineapple, raisins and nuts, stir well. Turn into a non-stick baking pan, 13x9x2. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour. If you do not have a non-stick pan, you will need to lightly oil and flour your pan.

Just a reminder! October is Breast Cancer awareness month. The American Cancer Association recommends a healthy diet that is high in fruits and vegetables, to lower your risk for many kinds of cancer, breast cancer included.

Have you joined MAC4wellness in eating 5 or more fruits or vegetables per day? If not, pick up your scorecards at Jane's or Mercersburg Market, or look in last week's (Oct. 8) *Mercersburg Journal*. At the end of October, email your total score to MAC4wellness@gmail.com. Fruit and vegetable champions will be awarded prizes! Good Luck!