

Habits for a Healthy Life



DEBBIE STEPLER

Using Whole Grains

By Debbie Stepler

Debbie Stepler, as co-owner of Mercersburg Market, has a special interest in providing healthy options for lunch and meal preparation!

This week you and I are going to be learning together.

I was raised, as I'm sure most of you were, that you buy white flour, bread and pasta. This is wheat, right? However, last week after reading Dr. George's article on the importance of whole grains in our diet, I decided to do some research.

After doing this research, I found that refining white flour takes about 40 to 50% of the vitamins and fiber out of the wheat. I also found that eating 2.5 servings of whole grain food a day can cut your risk of heart disease by one-quarter. You can also reduce your risk of bowel disorders, cancer, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Harvard medical school did a study on over 74,000 female nurses aged 38-63, over a 12 year period. Women who consumed more whole grain consistently weighed less than those who ate less of these fiber rich foods.

With all the whole grain cereals and breads out there today, I honestly believe that this is one of the easier changes that we can make in our diet. If we start our day with whole grains, we feel fuller and don't eat as much through the rest of the day.

I have found some easy recipes for you to try using whole grains. If you have access to the internet, "Google" whole grains and you'll

find lots of great recipes. Have fun with it.

Whole Grain Pita Pizza

2 round 6 or 7 inch whole wheat pitas

6 oz low sodium spaghetti sauce

3 oz part skim shredded mozzarella cheese
1 cup chopped vegetables (onions, peppers, mushrooms, spinach, olives, your choice!)

drizzle of olive oil

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

Spread ½ of the sauce on each pita round. If you are using spinach add it now, before the cheese, so it won't dry out as much. Top with the cheese and vegetables, divided between the two pizzas. Drizzle with olive oil. Bake for 15 minutes on a pizza pan or cookie sheet.

Mushroom Brown Rice Pilaf

½ large onion, chopped

1 cup sliced mushrooms

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 cup brown rice

2 cups fat free chicken broth or vegetable broth

Heat the oil in a large sauce pan and brown onion and mushrooms for about 5 minutes. Add the cup of brown rice and stir; add broth and bring to boil, then turn down to a simmer. Simmer 45 minutes or until all liquid is absorbed. Cooking time for whole grain rice varies according to the variety of rice. Check package directions.