

HealthPoint

TRENDS IN HEALTH & WELLNESS

OCTOBER 2011



Cutting Calories the Easy Way

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You may snicker when you hear your lunch mate order salad dressing on the side or ask the chef to “hold the mayo.” But these little tricks are excellent examples of calorie-cutting techniques that can help you maintain a healthy weight.

Since being overweight is a risk factor for developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease, it’s important to make an effort to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. You may have tried many weight control strategies, but one of the simplest – and most successful – is eating fewer calories.

Calories = energy

A calorie is a measure of how much energy is in a food. If you take in more than your body needs, you can gain weight. (Exercise can help you burn calories, of course.) Even small adjustments – say, reducing your food intake by 100 calories a day – can help lower weight gradually and prevent weight gain. Consider implementing some of these ideas to easily save 100 calories at dinner or lunch:

- Remove the skin from chicken breasts
- Use 5 mL (1 teaspoon) of mustard instead of mayonnaise on your sandwich
- Make your own salad dressing with one-quarter or one-half less oil.
- Omit the cheese sauce from your steamed vegetables

- Bake fish or chicken instead of deep-frying it. Try our Tangy crunchy chicken (see attached).
- Replace half the butter with unsweetened applesauce in homemade muffins, cookies and cake
- Use lettuce leaves instead of tortillas to make wraps and tacos.
- Enjoy soup made from pureed vegetables instead of cream.

Calories can add up quickly when you snack often or drink sugary beverages. When it comes to snacks and drinks, you can save 100 calories if you:

- Dip celery or cucumber instead of 12 tortilla chips into salsa
- Enjoy 250 mL (1 cup) of blueberries instead of 20 jelly beans
- Eat a medium orange instead of drinking 250 mL (1 cup) of orange juice
- Quench your thirst with 250 mL (1 cup) of sodium-free mineral water instead of cola
- Order your cappuccino or latte with skim milk instead of whole milk
- Replace 60 mL (four tablespoons) of coffee cream with skim milk

Another simple way to cut calories is to use smaller plates, bowls and cups. With less space to fill, you tend to eat less – as long as you skip seconds! All these easy changes take just a small effort, but could help you achieve big results.

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GROUP BENEFITS

Tangy Crunchy Chicken

Serves 4 | Prep Time: 20mins | Cook Time: 15mins | Total Time: 35mins

My son couldn't stop eating these tasty bites. The hint of honey in the dip adds a special touch to a weeknight meal. Serve these up with oven roasted potatoes and big green salad.

Ingredients

500 g (1 lb) boneless skinless chicken breasts
75 mL (1/3 cup) plain low fat or 0% Greek yogurt
15 mL (1 tbsp) chopped fresh parsley
5 mL (1 tsp) chopped fresh thyme or 2 mL (1/2 tsp) dried
1 large clove garlic, minced
Pinch freshly ground pepper
500 mL (2 cups) bran flake cereal
15 mL (1 tbsp) freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Honey ketchup:

45 mL (3 tbsp) ketchup
15 mL (1 tbsp) liquid honey
5 mL (1 tsp) Dijon mustard



Directions

1. Cut chicken breasts crosswise into 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide strips; set aside.
2. In shallow bowl, combine yogurt, parsley, thyme, garlic and pepper. Add chicken and turn to coat well. Let stand for 10 minutes or cover and refrigerate for up to 4 hours.
3. Crush bran flakes in resealable bag; add cheese. Toss chicken with cereal mixture and place on parchment paper lined baking sheet. Bake in 200 C (400 F) oven for 15 minutes or until no longer pink inside.
4. Meanwhile, stir together ketchup, honey and mustard. Serve with chicken.

Tip: Substitute boneless skinless turkey breast cutlets or lean boneless pork chops for the chicken

Nutritional Info Per Serving: 224 calories; 32g protein; 3g total fat; 1g saturated fat; 1g fibre; 9g Sugars; 364mg sodium

Recipe developed by Emily Richards, PH Ec.

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