

20 Tips to Improve your Diet

Simple Substitutions

- 
1. When baking, replace 1 cup of oil or butter with 1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce, drained crushed pineapple, or smashed ripe bananas.
 2. Instead of using sour cream as a food topper, switch to fat-free plain Greek yogurt. It tastes just like sour cream but is packed with protein and has a nice thick consistency!
 3. To lighten up mashed potatoes, replace butter and cream with equal amounts of chicken or vegetable stock.
 4. Looking for a way to make more nutritious brownies that are moist and rich? Replace flour with drained and mashed canned black beans at a 1:1 ratio (Replace 1 cup of flour with 1 cup of mashed black beans).
 5. For a lower calorie option, replace noodles with thinly sliced zucchini. This is great for lasagna, fettuccine and even spaghetti (Blanch in boiling water for 30 seconds to bring sliced zucchini up to temperature).
 6. To lighten up your egg dishes (Quiche or omelets), use half real eggs and half egg substitutes like Egg Beaters. Just remember, 1/4 cup of egg substitute is equal to 1 large egg.
 7. When a recipe calls for cream cheese, replace the entire amount with low-fat cream cheese or use a blend of half low-fat and half fat-free cream cheese to reduce calories even more without altering the taste of the original recipe.

Easy Swaps

8. To cut calories and reduce saturated fat, choose leaner cuts of meat like skinless chicken breast, pork loin, ground turkey, round roast or steak, sirloin tip side steak, and top sirloin steak.
9. To get more fiber, vitamins and minerals in your diet each day, switch to whole grain options instead of refined grains (Whole wheat bread, brown rice, and quinoa instead of white bread and white rice). Fiber-rich foods will also fill you up quicker and keep you feeling fuller for longer!

10. Save money and calories each day by replacing soda and sugar sweetened beverages with water. If you're not a fan of plain water, boost the flavor by adding sliced lemon, lime, or orange, or choose no-calorie water enhancers like Mio or Crystal Light.

11. Not a fan of vegetables? Give caramelized onions and roasted vegetables a try! You may find that they have way more flavor than steamed or boiled vegetables. Try tossing vegetables like halved Brussels sprouts in olive oil, add a sprinkle of salt, and bake in the oven on 400°F for 15 minutes. Or if you're trying to keep the calories down, use a non-stick cooking spray instead of oil to grease your pan or vegetables before cooking.

12. Making homemade salad dressing is an easy way to cut back on sugar and other preservatives while making your salads extra tasty. For a bottle of salad dressing that you can use for weeks, whisk together 1 cup of extra virgin olive oil, 1/2 cup of balsamic vinegar (or whatever vinegar you have on hand), 1 tablespoon of Dijon mustard, 1 clove of minced garlic, and a pinch of salt.

13. Canned beans are a great way to add protein, fiber, and other important nutrients to any meal. Since canned foods are high in sodium, choose low sodium or no salt added options and then add just a sprinkle of salt after the dish has been prepared. Be sure to taste your food before adding salt -- you may find that it doesn't need it!

14. To reduce added sugar, buy plain or unflavored yogurt or oatmeal and add your own toppings at home! Try flavoring your plain yogurt with sliced strawberries, almonds, and a drizzle of honey.

Fight Hunger

15. Incorporating protein and fat into your breakfast meal can help to keep you full for longer and will give you the energy you need to start your day off right. Skip the sweets and go for an omelet with sautéed vegetables and reduced fat cheese.

16. If you're planning for a day of work or just a day away from home, pack nutrient-rich snacks like nuts and fresh fruit (1 tablespoon of peanut butter and an apple) to keep you going until your next meal.

17. Carry a water bottle with you throughout the day to reduce your appetite and keep you well hydrated.

18. Choose whole fruit over fruit juice. Whole fruit has way more nutrients compared to fruit juice including fiber, which will help to fill you up and keep you feeling fuller for longer (Fruit juice contains no fiber). Fruit juice, whether 100% or not, is mainly sugar water.

19. Avoid refined carbohydrates like white bread, white rice, white pasta, and sugar which cause spikes in blood sugar and will leave you feeling hungry again in no time.

20. Take time to savor your food. When possible, make meal time a social event with family and/or friends. When you slow down and savor your food, you're able to listen to your bodies signals and stop when you are full.

