

Healthy recipes: A guide to ingredient substitutions

Use this guide to see how you can make simple ingredient substitutions that will give your recipes a healthy boost.

By Mayo Clinic staff

Whipping up healthy recipes may be easier than you think. You can make simple ingredient substitutions to create healthy recipes that don't sacrifice taste and enjoyment.

To create healthy recipes, first look at what's on hand in your own pantry. You may have healthier ingredients available and not realize it. If you don't have the ingredients on hand to create healthy recipes, just make a shopping list for the next time you hit the store.

Use this guide to help reduce the amount of fat, salt, sugar and calories as you prepare healthy recipes.

Your guide to ingredient substitutions for healthy recipes

| If your recipe calls for this ingredient: | Try substituting this ingredient: |
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| Bacon | Canadian bacon, turkey bacon, smoked turkey or lean prosciutto (Italian ham) |
| Bread, white | Whole-grain bread |
| Bread crumbs, dry | Rolled oats or crushed bran cereal |
| Butter, margarine, shortening or oil in baked goods | Applesauce or prune puree for half of the called-for butter, shortening or oil; butter spreads or shortenings specially formulated for baking that don't have trans fats Note: To avoid dense, soggy or flat baked goods, don't substitute oil for butter or shortening. Also don't substitute diet, whipped or tub-style margarine for regular margarine. |
| Butter, margarine, shortening or oil to prevent sticking | Cooking spray or nonstick pans |
| Cream | Fat-free half-and-half, evaporated skim milk |
| Cream cheese, full fat | Fat-free or low-fat cream cheese, Neufchatel, or low-fat cottage cheese pureed until smooth |
| Eggs | Two egg whites or 1/4 cup egg substitute for each whole egg |
| Flour, all-purpose (plain) | Whole-wheat flour for half of the called-for all-purpose flour in baked goods Note: Whole-wheat pastry flour is less dense and works well in softer products like cakes and muffins. |
| Fruit canned in heavy syrup | Fruit canned in its own juices or in water, or fresh |

fruit

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| Ground beef | Extra-lean or lean ground beef, chicken or turkey breast (make sure no poultry skin has been added to the product) |
| Lettuce, iceberg | Arugula, chicory, collard greens, dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens, spinach or watercress |
| Mayonnaise | Reduced-calorie mayonnaise-type salad dressing or reduced-calorie, reduced-fat mayonnaise |
| Meat as the main ingredient | Three times as many vegetables as the meat on pizzas or in casseroles, soups and stews |
| Milk, evaporated | Evaporated skim milk |
| Milk, whole | Reduced-fat or fat-free milk |
| Oil-based marinades | Wine, balsamic vinegar, fruit juice or fat-free broth |
| Pasta, enriched (white) | Whole-wheat pasta |
| Rice, white | Brown rice, wild rice, bulgur or pearl barley |
| Salad dressing | Fat-free or reduced-calorie dressing or flavored vinegars |
| Seasoning salt, such as garlic salt, celery salt or onion salt | Herb-only seasonings, such as garlic powder, celery seed or onion flakes, or use finely chopped herbs or garlic, celery or onions |
| Soups, creamed | Fat-free milk-based soups, mashed potato flakes, or pureed carrots, potatoes or tofu for thickening agents |
| Soups, sauces, dressings, crackers, or canned meat, fish or vegetables | Low-sodium or reduced-sodium versions |
| Sour cream, full fat | Fat-free or low-fat sour cream, plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt |
| Soy sauce | Sweet-and-sour sauce, hot mustard sauce or low-sodium soy sauce |
| Sugar | In most baked goods you can reduce the amount of sugar by one-half; intensify sweetness by adding vanilla, nutmeg or cinnamon |
| Syrup | Pureed fruit, such as applesauce, or low-calorie, sugar-free syrup |
| Table salt | Herbs, spices, citrus juices (lemon, lime, orange), rice vinegar, salt-free seasoning mixes or herb blends |
| Yogurt, fruit-flavored | Plain yogurt with |