



Tips to Make Convenience Foods Healthier

- For boxed mixes of rice, pasta, stuffing mix—use only half (or omit) the margarine called for in the instructions.
- For seasoned rice mixes—use only half of the seasoning packet; add the remaining half when cooking plain rice or as a seasoning for slow cooked meats.
- For frozen stir fry meals (those with all ingredients included)—use half of the seasoning packet to reduce sodium content.
- If packaged mix calls for milk—use nonfat dry milk powder and use twice as much to increase the amount of calcium.
- When heating tortillas—instead of using fat in skillet, use cooking spray, no spray, or heat in the microwave.
- To a frozen pizza—add chopped veggies (raw or cooked) to the top before baking.
- On baked potatoes—instead of sour cream, use cottage cheese or plain yogurt.
- To any creamed soup (cream of chicken, celery, mushroom)—add frozen mixed vegetables for a healthier soup meal.
- To tomato-based pasta sauce—add grated frozen spinach using up to one-half package of spinach per jar of pasta sauce (or start with less and increase amount as family adjusts to this addition).
- To spaghetti sauce—add 2 cups canned, frozen, or cooked vegetables.
- To a hamburger casserole boxed mix—reduce the fat in ground beef by draining fat from cooked ground beef and then placing beef in a colander over a bowl and rinsing with warm water (1 quart per pound).
- For dessert—serve sliced canned or fresh fruit instead of a sweet baked product.
- For a boxed macaroni and cheese—use half (or omit) the butter or margarine.
- For a boxed brownie mix—substitute an equal amount of unsweetened applesauce for vegetable oil (such as 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce for 1/2 cup vegetable oil); substitute 2 egg whites for each egg.

Visit these Web sites for more ideas:

ISU Extension Nutrition
www.extension.iastate.edu/nutrition

ISU Extension Publications
www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs

Adapted by Paulelda Gilbert, nutrition and health field specialist; Ruth Litchfield, Ph.D., R.D., extension nutritionist; and Diane Nelson, communication specialist.

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