

How to Trim the Fat

APPENDIX E

How to Trim the Fat

Ways to Gradually Reduce Fat Without Losing Flavor

As you develop menus, you will want to gradually begin introducing lower fat versions of higher fat favorites. A little fat goes a long way, but not every menu item needs to be lower in fat. So go slowly, and remember practicality and acceptability are still key when planning menus young children will happily consume.

There are lots of ways to be creative when you're cutting back on fat. You've probably already discovered many! Add these ideas to your list if they are not already on it.

- When adding fats to recipes, select unsaturated fats such as liquid oils or soft margarine.
- Cook rice, grains, and beans in defatted broth and add herbs, garlic, or onions for more taste.
- Trim fat from meats.
- Drain all meats after cooking.
- De-fat whenever possible. If your center has the ability to quickly chill and reheat foods in a safe manner, allow time to let your stews, soups, and braised dishes cool so that the fats will rise to the top, congeal, and be easy to spoon off.

Tips for Lowfat Baking

Did you know that...

- You can generally cut the fat in your recipes by 1/4 *without* losing the great taste in baked items.
- Chilled, undiluted evaporated fat-free milk can be a great substitute for cream.
- Some yeast breads such as French bread and English muffins can be made successfully without fat.

You may also be interested to find out that...

- Decreasing the fat too much in *rolled* cookies can make a dough that is difficult to roll out. Switching to *soft drop* cookies allows you to cut fat with better results.
- You can use fruit purees, such as prune puree or applesauce, in place of up to half the fat in some baked goods.

For best results in reducing total fat and/or saturated fat...

- Replace butter and lard with soft margarine or vegetable oil.
- Use a non-stick cooking spray on baking pans.
- Check ingredient labels and recipes for high-fat foods. When possible, choose similar products without high-fat ingredients.

How to Use Less Fat when Sautéing and Stir-Frying

- Brush the pan with oil just to coat it or use a nonstick spray made from vegetable oil. Typically, using a vegetable oil spray will add less than 10 fat calories to a pan of sauteed vegetables. In contrast, 2 tablespoons of oil add an extra 240 fat calories.
- When stir-frying, keep the oil in your kettle very hot. Vegetables soak up cold oil more quickly than hot oil.
- Cut back on buttering vegetables by using one part margarine and one part lemon juice.
- Experiment with ways to add flavor and moisture without adding fat. Marinades are a good way to do this. Also try using chicken or meat broth, concentrated fruit juice, or perhaps fresh fruit or vegetable juice.