

HEALTHY COOKING

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Cooking at home can be very rewarding experience. Most often it will improve the health of your diet. If you don't currently do any cooking, schedule one day a week to shop/prepare foods to start. Pick out some recipes and make your grocery list.

COOKING PREPARATION

- **Cookware:** As much as possible use stainless steel, glass or ceramic pots and pans. Use stainless steel or glassware for storage.
- **Wash your food:** Thoroughly rinse all vegetables, lettuce, and greens before using. The use of vegetable and fruit soap is recommended for removing pesticide residue. Soak organic and homegrown produce for 30 minutes to remove small bugs.
- **Cooking oils:** Some of my favorite oils to keep on hand are olive oil, coconut oil, sesame oil, and butter or ghee. Of these, only coconut oil and butter can be cooked at high temperatures. Extra virgin olive oil should only be given medium heat.
- Keep countertops uncluttered and wipe clean and sterilize after cooking.

COOKING TIPS

- **Cooking grains:** Soak grains in warm filtered water for 7-24 hours before cooking. This helps to eliminate phytates that may inhibit nutrient absorption. You can add a little yogurt, lemon or vinegar to the warm water to assist this process.
- **Cooking beans:** Beans should be soaked for a minimum of 24 hours in warm filtered water with a little lemon, vinegar or yogurt. Wash thoroughly. As they are cooking, make sure to skim foam off the top.
- **Cooking vegetables:** There is no right or wrong way to cook vegetables. Enjoy a variety of methods of preparation including steaming, sautéing, fermenting, baking, pureeing and raw. Some water-soluble vitamins can be lost through cooking.
- **Cooking meat and poultry:** Using a thermometer will help ensure you have thoroughly cooked your meat. Poultry should be cooked to 180° F, Ham and pork roast 160° F, Beef and lamb to 160° F for medium, 145° F for medium rare. Minimize charbroiling as the black crispy part of the meat contain unhealthy polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
- **Cooking fish:** Fish should smell a bit like the sea but fresh – it *should not* smell bad when it is unwrapped. Make sure fish is cooked all the way through.

MINIMIZE

- Use ½ the quantity of dishwashing detergent in the dishwasher. These products are toxic and you want to be thoroughly washed before consuming food on dishes.
- **Frying:** Eliminate deep-frying. Instead braise, broil, bake, grill, roast, or sauté.
- **Microwave:** Not enough is known about the long-term safety of eating foods cooked in the microwave.
- **Minimize salt:** Salt is not bad, but some individuals may be salt sensitive. Particularly those with water retention or high blood pressure. The use of herbs and spices helps to minimize salt use. Also sea salt is higher in minerals than regular table salt.
- **Avoid aluminum:** Aluminum is a highly toxic metal. Large numbers of aluminum molecules enter food that is cooked, covered by or stored in aluminum pots, pans, cans and foil. Teflon coatings may not prevent aluminum from leaching into foods, and may present harmful chemicals as well.