

Kids LiveWell

RECIPE
SWAPS



RECIPE SWAPS TO ENHANCE NUTRITION IN RESTAURANT RECIPES

Here are a few suggestions to help bring your menus closer to Kids LiveWell certified.

Use plain, non-fat Greek yogurt over sour cream or mayo

This tart topping can replicate the thick and creamy tanginess of sour cream or mayo while reducing calories, fat, and sodium in a recipe.

Turn vegetables into containers

Consider lettuce wraps for recipes that call for tortillas or bread. Halved and deseeded bell peppers or zucchinis can serve as a boat for your favorite filling. This will help cut calories and provide extra fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Substitute zoodles or alternative pastas for noodles

While there's no pretending a "noodle" made out of vegetables is going to taste or feel exactly like the real thing, consider spiralized vegetables or alternative plant-based pastas like those made from beans as substitutes.

Switch herbs and spices for salt

There may not always be a perfect replacement for salt, but using fresh or dried herbs and spices can make for flavorful lower-salt cooking.

Replace butter with olive oil

Sautéing ingredients in olive oil can improve the nutritional quality of a recipe because it has much less saturated fat and sodium than traditional salted butter.

Exchange roasted vegetables for chips or fries

For a savory side dish with less saturated fat and sodium than chips or fries, thinly cut up vegetables like carrots or broccoli and toss them in olive oil with a little salt and pepper before roasting.

Choose whole grain versions

Whole grain foods like brown rice, oats, and whole wheat bread or buns are packed with nutrition and there is evidence that people who eat more of them are less likely to suffer from nutrition related chronic diseases.

Add fruits and veggies to everything

Fruits and veggies are easy and kid-friendly sides. Consider pairing them with dips like yogurt and hummus for extra flavor. Add them to salads. Drop them into smoothies. The possibilities are limitless!

Blend beans to make soup creamy instead of heavy cream

For every 1/2 cup of cream called for in a recipe, replace it with a 1/2 cup of pureed white beans and a 1/2 cup of salt-free broth or water.

Utilize low and reduced-sodium varieties

Some ingredients like soy sauce or chicken broth can pack in a lot of salt, but opting for low or reduced-sodium versions of these ingredients can go a long way towards improving the sodium levels of a recipe.

Opt for low-fat dairy

Certain dairy products like cheeses can be high in calories and saturated fat. Opting for low-fat versions of these ingredients can provide the same great taste without compromising the nutrition.

Reduce added salt and sugar

Often times added salt and sugar in a recipe can be reduced without significantly impacting taste or texture but can greatly improve the nutritional quality of the food. Experiment by slowly lowering the amounts each time the recipe is prepared and check if there is a notable difference.

Consider smaller portions

Decreasing portion sizes of particular foods is one way to feed little stomach and can help you meet the nutrition criteria. Pair smaller portions with low calorie sides like fruits and veggies.