

Total Nutrition

Healthy Cooking Made Easy

by *Mindy Hermann, R.D.*

(NAPSA)—I've been cooking healthy for so long that it has become second nature. The downside is I often cringe at my friends' cooking—too much butter or oil, oversized portions of meat and too few whole grains and vegetables.

Healthy cooking can be easy if you use just a few simple strategies that can become part of your cooking habits:



Mindy Hermann

“Use nonstick cooking spray instead of lots of oil, butter or margarine for sautéing,” says

Elisa Zied, MS, RD, CDN, spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association and author of “So What Can I Eat?!” (Wiley, 2006). “Try flavored sprays on potatoes—slices, wedges or potato skins—to save calories and fat without skimping on flavor.”

Switch to whole grains.

Brown rice, whole wheat pasta and whole grain cereals are easy to find. A creative way to enjoy whole grains is to use breakfast cereal, such as Whole Grain Total, as a crumble or topping:

- Toss with cinnamon and a little brown sugar to put on a fruit cobbler.

- Add to a tossed salad for added crunch.

- Dip 1 pound skinless chicken pieces, cut in 2-inch pieces, in egg. Roll in 1½ cups crushed cereal crumbs mixed with ¼ cup flour, 1 teaspoon paprika and seasoned salt

and a dash of ground red pepper; then bake at 425° for 10 to 12 minutes for a crispy and high-nutrition alternative to fried chicken.

Choose lower-fat cuts of meat, such as top round, London broil and pork tenderloin. The fat and calorie savings can be significant. To keep them tender, avoid overcooking and combine with moist ingredients such as vegetables.

Cook with vegetables.

“When you make omelets or scrambled eggs, for example, load up on vegetables like asparagus, tomato, mushroom, broccoli or whatever you like,” suggests Zied. Add vegetables to your favorite soups and increase the amount of veggies in stir-fried dishes.

Switch to low-fat dairy—low-fat and fat-free milk and yogurt and reduced-fat cheeses. Look for healthier recipes for classic dishes like macaroni and cheese and lasagna.

Ask Mindy

Q: When I try to eat better, my grocery bill goes up. Do you have suggestions for keeping the cost down?

A: Be a smart shopper. Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season and on sale. Stock up on frozen vegetables when your market is running a special. Clip coupons for healthful foods like whole wheat bread, whole grain cereals (including Whole Grain Total®) and yogurts. Purchase chicken on sale, divide into sealable plastic bags, label and freeze.

