Cook this Way for Good Health

You’ve loaded your grocery cart with healthy fruits, veggies and lean proteins. Now it’s time to actually put them together into a meal.

Don’t sabotage your good-health efforts by frying, breading or salting. Preparing healthy foods in the proper way can help you get the most nutrients while cutting back on fat, calories and salt. Here’s how:

- **Value your veggies.** Cook them quickly to avoid letting their flavor, vitamins and minerals escape. Think steaming or stir-frying. Use a little splash of vegetable oil instead of butter or margarine.
- **Make the most of your meat.** Back away from the fryer. Instead, try these methods to make chicken, fish or meat. Broil or roast them in a pan in the oven. Poach them in a low-fat liquid like wine or tomato juice. Or stir-fry them in a wok with vegetable stock or a small amount of oil.
- **Season wisely.** Herbs and spices add flavor without salt, calories or fat. And skip the heavy sauces. Lemon juice, fresh hot peppers, citrus zest, nuts, and dried fruits and veggies (like cherries and tomatoes) add an extra punch.
- **Baking with benefits.** Making your own baked goods can help you avoid harmful trans fats, and you can even add a healthy boost. When your cake or muffins call for yogurt or sour cream, use low-fat versions. Try using mashed bananas or applesauce for butter and oil, and replace half of the regular flour with whole wheat flour.

Catch the Benefits of Fish

The American Heart Association suggests eating fish (particularly fatty fish) at least two times a week. Fish is a good source of protein and doesn’t have the high saturated fat found in fatty meat products. Examples of fish that are good sources for omega-3 fatty acids include:

- Mackerel
- Lake trout
- Herring
- Albacore tuna
- Sardines
- Salmon

Sources: American Heart Association, American Dietetic Association

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What Works for a Pain in the Neck?

Neck pain is a common complaint among women. What helps? Stretching exercises often are suggested. But one study showed that they are not very effective. Instead, study members got the most pain relief with strengthening and endurance exercises. Here are some examples:

- Build up your neck muscles. Try lifting your head, then gently lowering it, while lying on your back.
- Exercise your shoulders and upper arms. The women in this study used small dumbbells weighing about four pounds each to perform arm curls and presses.
- Strengthen your trunk and leg muscles with squats and sit-ups.

Study group members worked out five times a week. But the research showed that even two times weekly might ease neck pain.

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association

Don’t Overlook Eye Health

More than 2,000 people hurt their eyes each day. That’s why you should always wear protective eyewear at work, home or play when taking part in an activity that may hurt your eyes.

Get exams to catch eye problems early. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Have your children screened before age 5 if you have family members who had eyesight problems as children.
- Adults ages 40 to 45 should get an eye exam every two to four years.
- Adults over 65 should have an eye exam every one to two years.
- You should see an eye doctor right away if you have eye problems such as pain, seeing spots, nonstop tearing, extreme dryness, vision changes or flashes of light.

Sources: American Academy of Ophthalmology, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

When You Keep Asthma in Check, You’ll be Breathing Better

If you or a loved one has asthma, you know the value of controlling your symptoms. Working with your doctor, you can find your asthma triggers and try to avoid them. Check your asthma on a regular basis and call your doctor if you see it getting worse. Ask your doctor for a written asthma plan and look at it together during your visits. See your doctor every six months, because asthma can change over time.

Review your medicines with your doctor and be sure you know how to take them. Remember to get a flu shot every year.

Common triggers that can cause asthma attacks include:

- Mites and cockroaches
- Poor indoor or outdoor air quality
- Pets
- Mold
- Tobacco smoke
- Smoke from burning wood or leaves

Now is a good time to watch out for both common triggers and these less common ones:

- Allergies
- Working out
- Certain medicines
- Acid reflux
- A lot of water in the air or thunderstorms
- Breathing in perfumes or chemicals
- Certain foods
- Strong feelings that cause fast breathing
- Colds and sinus problems

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention