



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

A New You All Year

January / February

Here is a different approach to New Year's resolutions! Set one resolution to do for each month throughout the year. Try each of the suggestions below for one month, or make your own list of monthly resolutions. The key is to keep new behaviors specific and do-able. As each month closes, congratulate yourself for practicing healthy habits, and resolve to continue to take steps to a healthier you!



January. This month, substitute three servings a day of whole grain cereals, breads and tortillas for products made with refined enriched flours and grains.

February. Eat canned, fresh or frozen fish eight times this month, or twice a week.

March. Switch from sweetened drinks to beverages without added sugar.

April. This month, eat more fresh, frozen or canned vegetables (especially dark green, yellow, orange or red ones, or cooked dry beans, lentils or peas).

May. Each day, include low-fat or fat-free sources of calcium in your diet. Switch from whole to low-fat milk, and choose reduced-fat yogurt and cheese.

June. Break into summer by eating breakfast each day of this month.

July. The year is half over! Eat 2 cups of fruits (fresh, canned, frozen, dried or juiced) each day this month, with no more than 1 cup of fruit juice per day.

August. This month, choose steamed, grilled or baked dishes instead of fried foods. Trim visible fat and skin from meat and poultry.

September with Less Sodium. Avoid salty snack foods this month. Instead, snack on fruits, vegetables, unsalted popcorn or a small handful of unsalted nuts or seeds.

October. Eat four meatless suppers this month, one each week. Include meals with cooked dry beans, calcium-rich foods, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

November. This month, change four favorite recipes to lower their content of solid fats, added sugars, full-fat dairy products, fatty meats, and/or sodium.

December. Each day, do at least 30 minutes of physical activity.

Save Money while Slashing Salt Intake

Health experts advise adults ages 51 years and older, all African Americans, and those who have high blood pressure to eat less sodium each day than the average U.S. diet contains.



A diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat dairy products, along with regular physical activity and losing excess body weight, helps lower blood pressure. Here are ways to preserve the good taste of foods while cutting back on dietary salt AND being savvy with your money:

- **Eat more foods from the farm and fewer from the factory.** Buy as close to natural as possible, since processed packaged foods typically contain much more sodium than minimally processed ones. If you do buy a packaged food product, buy a “no added salt” or a reduced-sodium version when possible. Also, compare the food labels of similar products. For example, fresh tomatoes have virtually no sodium; the sodium content of one brand of tomato soup is 1,100 mg per serving; and the sodium in another brand of tomato soup is 600 mg sodium per serving.
- **Eat restaurant foods less often.** One hamburger at a popular U.S. restaurant contains 6,400 mg sodium, which is four times more than the daily amount recommended! Cooking your own sandwich at home will likely be much lower in sodium, and will also save you time and money. If you do dine out, ask that your meal be made with no added salt. At national restaurant chains, choose lower sodium options after asking about the nutrition information of their foods.
- **Be aware of certain foods.** Foods that are high in sodium include: frozen dinners, commercially-prepared soups, canned vegetables, canned and cured meats, condiments, cheeses, breads and baked goods. Many processed foods that are reduced or low in fat have had salt added to them to enhance their taste. For example, 1 ounce of salted peanuts contain only about half of the sodium found in 1 ounce of low-fat colby or cheddar cheese (91 mg sodium for the peanuts, 174 mg sodium for the low-fat cheese)!
- **Be smart about food labels.** If you buy packaged foods, the only way to know how much sodium is in it is to read the Nutrition Facts on the label.
- **Prepare meals at home often**, where you can be in control of the ingredients. *Dining on a Dime’s* Chocolate Whole Grain Surprise Treats contain whole wheat flour, fresh carrots and applesauce. See page 4 for directions.



You may view previous newsletters at www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=184
This issue is an updated revision of parts of the “Dining on a Dime” December 2007, August 2008, and February and May 2011 newsletters. Contents of this publication may be reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Erin Henry and Mary Meck Higgins, “Dining on a Dime,” January 2016.

Eating Colorful Plant Foods

Research shows that the single best way to improve health is to eat plenty of naturally colorful fruits and vegetables — deep reds, orange, yellows, whites, blues, purples, blacks and greens.



Why care about colors?

Color compounds form more than 2,000 pigments in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. These colors make plant foods not only look scrumptious, but also contain strong antioxidants. In general, the deeper the color, the more powerful its healthful antioxidant action.

Plant pigments are just one type of naturally-occurring antioxidants. Other phytochemicals (“phyto,” pronounced fight-o, means plant) in addition to antioxidants help protect against the damaging effects of toxic substances. Eating a variety of plant foods allows their different phytochemicals to work together to help fight illnesses and disease.

Colorful plant foods provide many healthful qualities. Most plant foods are naturally low in calories, fat and sodium and are high in water content, vitamins and minerals. None contain cholesterol. Many are good sources of dietary fiber, which helps satisfy hunger and enhances bowel health. Fruit has natural sweetness.

Making a colorful diet common

Fruits, vegetables and whole grains offer an appetizing rainbow of colors. Since each color protects body tissues in its own way, the best way to power up your plate — and please your palate — is to eat a variety of colors and choices within each group each day. Adults are advised to eat 2 to 4 cups of vegetables, 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 cups of fruits, and 3 to 5 ounces of whole grains per day.

Eating colorful plant foods offers many satisfying tastes and textures. For instance, you can select from a variety of fresh, frozen, dried and canned fruits and vegetables. For the most nutrients per calorie, choose fruits and vegetables prepared without added salt, sugar, syrup or sauces. Choose modest portions of juices, since they offer less fiber than other forms and it’s easy to get surprisingly more calories from them.



Many brightly colored fruits, vegetables and whole grains are portable and require no preparation other than thoroughly rinsing them under cool running water, making them natural “convenience foods.”

To help remind yourself and family members to eat them, store fruits and vegetables where you’ll see them often.

Source: [Color Me Healthy: Enjoying Fruits and Vegetables](#), MLM Higgins, Kansas State University, MF2649

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



Dear reader,

I am retiring from Kansas State University, so this is the final issue of *Dining on a Dime*. I wish you the best of health!

Sincerely,

Mary Meck Higgins, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., FAND (Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics), K-State Research and Extension Human Nutrition Specialist and Associate Professor, Department of Human Nutrition

Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Chocolate Whole Grain Surprise Treats (Makes 12 servings)

Ingredients

3 large carrots, to yield 1 cup	2/3 cup granulated white sugar
2 large raw eggs	1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons vegetable oil	1 teaspoon baking soda
1/3 cup applesauce	1/8 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring	1/4 cup dark or regular unsweetened
1 1/4 cups whole wheat flour	cacao cocoa powder for baking



Directions

1. Wash your hands and work area. **2.** Peel and finely grate carrots to yield 1 cup. **3.** In a medium bowl, stir together carrots, eggs, oil, applesauce and vanilla. **4.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. **5.** Spray an 8 x 8-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. **6.** In a large bowl, stir together flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder and cocoa powder. **7.** Stir carrot mixture into flour mixture. Mix until just moistened. **8.** Pour batter into pan. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. **9.** Let cool. Cut into 12 pieces. Note: Extra servings freeze well. *Nutrition Facts per serving: 130 calories, 3.5 g fat, 0.5 grams saturated fat, 0 grams trans fat, 23 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 30 mg cholesterol, 135 mg sodium and 2 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 30% vitamin A, 2% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 6% iron.*

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