

Consumer and Family Sciences



Department of Foods and
Nutrition



Altering Recipes for Better Health

Dietary guidelines recommend that we reduce the amount of fat, sugar, and salt that we eat. These same guidelines encourage us to include more fiber in our diets by eating whole grain products and more fruits and vegetables.

You may decide that the best way for you to improve your diet is by reducing the portions of the foods you normally eat or by eating less of foods that are high in fat, sugar, and salt. But, one way to improve your diet is by altering the recipes of the foods that you are now eating by using less fat, sugar, and salt. You may or may not be satisfied with the results of these changes, depending on your personal tastes and standards, as well as the type of food.

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Changing the ingredients

Some recipes can be altered by simply reducing an ingredient or substituting one for another. Some general reductions and substitutions include the following:

- Sugar can be reduced by $\frac{1}{3}$. Example: If a recipe says 1 cup, use $\frac{2}{3}$ cup. This works best in home canned and frozen fruits and in making puddings and custards. It may be less desirable for cookies and cakes. It should be remembered that noncaloric sweeteners work best as substitutes for sugar in uncooked foods. They are usually adversely affected by heat. These substitutes also do not perform the other functions of sugar, which will be discussed later in this publication.
- Fat can often be reduced by $\frac{1}{3}$. Example: If the recipe has 6 tablespoons, use 4 tablespoons. This works best in gravies, sauces, puddings, and quick breads.
- Salt may be left out or reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$. Example: If the recipe says 1 tablespoon, use $1\frac{1}{2}$ tea-

spoons. Use spices and herbs for a different flavor.

- Whole grain flour can be substituted for $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of refined flour. Example: If recipe has 3 cups all-purpose flour, use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole grain flour and $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour.
- Yogurt or cottage cheese may be substituted for sour cream in some sauce and dip recipes.
- Use low-fat cheese in place of higher fat cheese in recipes.
- Skim milk may be substituted for whole milk in most recipes.
- Evaporated milk or whipped nonfat dry milk may be substituted for cream in some recipes calling for whipped cream.

Functions and effects

Reducing sugar, salt, and fat can affect different foods in different ways. The following information tells the functions of these ingredients in different foods, gives the typical proportions of the ingredients, and lists the effects of reducing them in different foods.



