

Healthy



Cooking & **E**ating with

Diabetes



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Healthy Cooking and Eating with Diabetes

Each person with diabetes has different nutritional needs. This information will be general enough to help you get started with cooking in a healthier way to complement your personal diabetes plan. One goal of diabetes medical nutrition therapy is to continue the pleasure of eating, not take pleasure away.

Many people with diabetes are trying to eat healthier. How do you do that? We follow the same guidelines that people without diabetes follow for a healthy diet, but with the added look at carbohydrate type and amount. Overall, our diet should be moderated in fat, consistent carbohydrates (try to eat the same amount at each meal, each day, at the same time), moderate in sodium and high in fiber. In numbers, it is 50-70 gm.. Fat/day, 25-30 gm of fiber, 2000–3000 mg. sodium/day and most people do well with 3-4 servings of carbohydrate at each meal and 1-2 at snacks. Make sure to not go below 130 gm of carbohydrate each day for good health.

Cooking healthier usually means reviewing the ingredients and trying to come up with replacement ingredients that are lower in fat, sodium and calories. The original taste of the recipe should not be affected to the point of changing the flavor, but enhance the flavor. Some examples may be using lower sodium broth, lower fat meat cuts, lower sodium canned products, and spices and herbs to enhance flavor without adding calories or fat. There are a lot of tested recipes for those who are a little afraid of changing a recipe, but for most of us, changing ingredients can be a fun experiment.

Let's take a look at a usual recipe for stir fry chicken and then look at making changes to make the item healthier.

REGULAR CHICKEN STIR FRY

1 pound Chicken, cut in strips	1 fresh Vidalia Onion, chopped
¼ cup Vegetable Oil	1 cup canned Chicken Broth
2 Tablespoons Soy Sauce	2 Tbsps Cornstarch
1 can Chinese Vegetables, drained	1 Tbsp Honey
1 can Water Chestnuts, drained	2 cups Rice, cooked

Makes 4 servings.

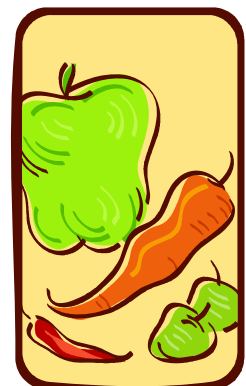
Calories: 546

Carbs: 33 gm.

Nutrition Information/Per Serving:

Fiber: 3 gm.

Fat: 18 gm.

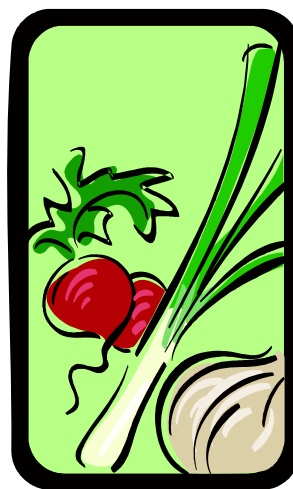


Pour oil in a large skillet or wok. Heat on high, watching carefully. Place chicken strips in hot oil and stir fry for 2-3 minutes, until white on the outside. Remove from the oil. Carefully add the chopped onions to the oil and stir fry for several minutes. Pour in the drained vegetables and water chestnuts. Mix the chicken broth, honey, soy sauce and cornstarch together and pour over the vegetables. Add the chicken and cover for 5-7 minutes. Sauce should thicken. Serve over cooked rice.

As you can see, this recipe used a lot of oil, and canned products, increasing the fat and sodium in this recipe. Also, canned products and white rice have little fiber in them. Now let's look at a way to make a delicious Chicken Stir Fry, reducing the fat, sodium and increasing the fiber.

NEW AND IMPROVED CHICKEN STIR FRY

- 10 oz. boneless, skinless Chicken Breast
- 1 Tbsp. Oil
- 2 Tbsp. Reduced sodium Soy Sauce
- 3 cups fresh or frozen Carrots, Broccoli, Green Beans, Green Peppers, Celery, chopped
- 1 fresh Vidalia Onion, chopped
- 1 cup low sodium canned Chicken Broth
- 2 Tbsp Cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp Honey
- 1 cups brown Rice, cooked



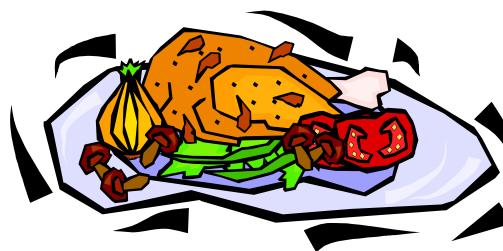
Heat oil in a skillet or wok. Place chicken in the hot oil and cook for 2-3 minutes, until white on the outside. Remove from the skillet and set aside. Place all the vegetables in the skillet and cook until crisp tender, about 3-5 minutes; Mix the chicken broth, honey, cornstarch together and pour over the vegetables. Replace the chicken, cover for 3-5 minutes until sauce thickens. Serve over the rice.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information/per serving:

Calories: 320 Fat: 11 gm
Carbs: 33 Fiber: 8 gm

written by: Nancy Walker, RD, LD, CDE, CFPP



By making a few changes, you can really enhance the nutritional value of a dish, and still retain or improve the flavor. Again, if this is too many healthy changes, make one or two changes at a time, test the recipe and try again with other changes. The less you cook most vegetables, the more fiber you retain. If brown rice is too grainy, try mixing half brown and half white.



Some other tricks in the kitchen to make it healthier are:

- *Use fresh ingredients wherever possible.*
- *Use non fat canned milk or ½ and 1/2 for cream soups, creamed potatoes, alfredo sauces, white sauces, etc.*
- *Use whole grain noodles, pasta, couscous, barley to add to soups, and casseroles to enhance flavor, thicken and add fiber.*
- *Use unsalted canned vegetables, broth, soups, etc. to give moisture without sodium.*
- *Use the leanest meat you can afford in recipes: 90-95% fat free meats are best.*
- *Use smaller amounts of margarine, butter, oil and cheeses than the recipe calls for and achieve the same results.*
- *Leave the skin on potatoes when making potato dishes to retain some fiber.*
- *Make your own 1 dish meals with whole grain macaroni, extra lean ground beef or chicken, peppers, onions, and low sodium beef broth. Add some vegetables, fresh or frozen and serve!*

Now, let's get down to business!! What about sweets?!? For most people, recipes may be the best way to start out. Sugar in recipes gives the product texture and height as well as taste. Some of you may remember the old "diabetic" recipes that took all the sugar out of the recipe and replaced it with saccharin. The cakes and cookies were usually flat and poor texture. However, in the past few years, many new sweeteners and recipes have been developed that really improves the quality of baked goods for those with diabetes.

In the past years, it is thought that total carb, rather than sugar alone, determines blood sugar levels when looking at foods, so a small amount of sugar in a recipe will improve the texture, but reduce the carb compared to many recipes. For sweetness, artificial sweeteners can be used to replace some of the sugar in a recipe.

Always remember, just because some of the sugar has been replaced, there may still be carbs in the recipe that can affect your blood sugar and need to be accounted for in your meal plan.

There are some great recipes in "Diabetic Cooking" magazine, "The Diabetes Forecast" magazine and many others. On-line, the American Diabetes Association has recipes for free and sells some excellent cookbooks from their website, www.diabetes.org.