

# 'Menu for Life' cookbook develops healthy habits

By Cathie Bredendick  
special writer

L. E. Smith, registered dietitian and co-author with Joan Klun Kaye of the cookbook, "Menu for Life," never tells people to "go on" diets when she counsels them at Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute in Rochester.

At least she doesn't tell them to go on the temporary denial diets that make them feel like reincarnated rabbits or sinners doing penance for culinary indulgence.

People "go on" such denial diets, suffer through them to achieve results, then "go off" them with relief only to find the results don't last and they've begun an endless cycle of constantly going on and off diets and feeling frustrated and not in control.

Instead, Smith counsels people to make permanent changes in their eating habits, not to deny themselves good food, but to cook food that's both tasty and healthy. The book, "Menu for Life" specializes in foods with taste and eye appeal whether the fare be around-the-kitchen-table family casseroles or gourmet entrees for entertaining.

**HEALTHY FOODS CAN** taste wonderful. Children rave about Melba Chicken Nuggets from the cookbook, yet the recipe for baked nuggets keeps fat content to 22 percent — well below the fat in the Golden Arches favorite.

Herbed potato sticks, a spicy, baked alternative to french fries, is another favorite that pleases adults and kids alike. These aren't denial foods, just healthy, satisfying food

carefully tested to strike a balance between sound nutrition and flavor.

Smith's partner, Joan Kaye, says she's noticed a shift in attitudes about eating. One people feel deprived when they had to watch what they ate. Now, she says, many people are looking at healthy eating with a positive attitude and feeling pampered and a bit privileged because they're taking special care of themselves.

She adds that when they cook company meals, "They're not just doing it for themselves. They're taking into consideration friends and relatives who have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, health problems or diabetes."

**WHEN SMITH FIRST** began telling people to lower their fat intake to comply with the American Heart Association recommended level of 30 percent of daily caloric intake and to reduce salt and sugar, her clients asked for recipes — but adequate cookbooks were scarce.

In 1987, she and accomplished cook Kaye joined ranks to publish a cookbook of tasty, healthy recipes that included nutritional information. Each recipe lists its calorie count and exchanges compatible with Weight Watchers and the American Dietetic Association. Recipes also include percentage of fat and carbohydrates, as well as the grams of protein, sodium, calcium, iron, dietary fiber, and cholesterol.

The nutritional information "helps people make eating decisions and helps them at the grocery store," Smith said. Women, in particular, appreciate knowing the calori-

um and iron content of recipes because many women find it difficult to get enough of both unless they consciously make an effort.

Smith explains that the RDA of iron for adult women is 15 mg a day and the average diet includes a 5-8 milligrams per 1,000 calories. Women would have to eat a lot of calories daily to get their required iron, unless they make deliberate eating decisions to include more iron-rich foods within a calorie intake that doesn't make them gain weight.

**TO PREVENT OSTEOPOROSIS** doctors recommend women make a point of getting adequate calcium in their diets. The recipes in "Menu for Life" not only note calcium content to help people make wise eating decisions, but Kaye says, "Many of our desserts have a solid base in calcium. Dieters need to be accomplishing something eating healthy desserts."

Because readers praised their first book for its easy-to-follow format and excellent recipes, the pair is writing a second book due out at the end of this year or early next year.

"We've got a winner in the format," Smith said of the list of nutritional information which makes "Menu for Life" so practical to use. Book two will follow the same format and will also emphasize cutting fat, salt and sugar. Recipes in "Menu for Life" are all below the American Medical Association 30-percent recommendation for fat intake and many are below 20 percent, Smith said.

"There are nine calories in a gram of fat. Fat is dense and controlling fat intake is the key to weight loss

and weight control." She adds that the bad news about fat may be worse than first reported. "New research indicates fat might be as high as 11 calories per gram."

Both "Menu for Life" and the new cookbook drastically eliminates or reduces salt by substituting Mrs. Dash (a commercial herb and spice blend), herbs, spices and lemon juice. Reducing salt intake is the key to lowering blood pressure for many people.

**THE COOKBOOK'S** recipes use no sugar substitutes. "We wanted to stay with food as a sweetener," Smith said, "and the logical choice was fruit." Typical sweeteners include orange juice concentrate and all-fruit preserves made without sugar. "You get more nutrients if you use fruit as a sweetener," she added.

To people accustomed to the heavy dosage of salt and sugar in most standard American food, Smith said changing eating habits "is a learning process. You start decreasing and gradually bring it down. We try to get people used to the natural flavor of foods."

Since the publication of "Menu for Life," Smith and Kaye have been invited to speak and give cooking demonstrations featuring their recipes. They've been interviewed on cable TV and WEXL radio's Home Show, made tofu-stuffed pasta shells at Kitchen Glamour stores, presented lectures at a Wellness Conference in Wisconsin and spoke about recipe modification at Women's Retreat in West Branch.

The pair uses recipes from their book for the twice-yearly dinners at the Great Oaks Country Club sponsored by the Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute of Oakland University. The dinners "introduce people to food that's gourmet and show it's no sacrifice to eat healthy," Smith said.

Kaye adds that another aim of the dinners is "to educate chefs to incorporate more health options."

The theme of the new cookbook is modification and in particular modifying the traditional recipes everyone loves.

"People don't think of changing old recipes," Kaye said. "They think they're written in stone." Such old standbys as meat loaf, mashed pota-

toes, and corn bread will be pared of some fat, salt and sugar. When the pair revised traditional corn bread recipes, they added some oat bran to increase fiber, eliminated egg yolks to cut cholesterol, reduced the amount of oil used and used canola oil which has more neutral flavor than olive oil and is healthier than corn oil.

The new book will include international favorites such as hummus and tabouli from the Middle East, chicken cacciatore from Italy as well as tasty meatless entrees. It even includes cheesecake — the ultimate high-fat indulgence. The secret in their high-calcium, low-fat cheesecake is draining yogurt for at least six hours to get out the whey, then using the resulting yogurt cheese as the base for the cheesecake.

A diet that includes cheesecake has come a long way from the rabbit food and self-denial of short-term diets destined for failure. A "menu for life" celebrates the colors, flavors, and textures of good, healthy food.

"Menu for Life" is available at all Kitchen Glamour stores and Borders book stores. It can also be ordered by calling 375-2130.

## Authors practice what they preach

L.E. Smith and Joan Klun Kaye, good friends and cookbook authors, have long made a brisk daily walk part of their exercise routine.

As a dietitian, food is Smith's career and as an accomplished cook, it has long been Kaye's favorite avocation. Yet both say emphatically that healthy eating is only half the fitness story.

"It has to be integrated with exercise; you need both for fitness and

weight reduction," said Smith. "The growing trend favors walking over jogging and running. With walking, there is no need for a health club. All you need is a good pair of shoes and you go out the door."

The two of them often walk together and use exercise time for social catching-up and for planning their cookbook joint venture.

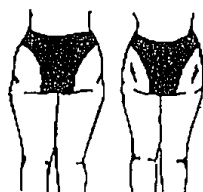
**KAYE SUGGESTS** "filling in with exercise videos when the weather is

too bitter for comfortable walking." She favors low impact aerobics without the bouncing and jumping which cause stress on vulnerable joints. Recently the two women began lifting free weights to complement their walking program. Kaye said.

"We started so we'd have the strength to lift boxes of books (cookbooks, no doubt) out of the car trunk and haul things through airports."

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