

Crunchy grains top good-for-you dessert

In today's kitchen, vegetable shortenings have replaced lard. Foods are pan-fried in vegetable oil versus butter. And margarine is the everyday spread of choice.

Many of us have made changes like these in an effort to reduce animal fats, which are primarily saturated and, thus, have the potential to raise blood cholesterol. However, when vegetable fats are hydrogenated, they also become saturated and, thus, have cholesterol-raising potential, says Mary Helen Gunkler, registered dietitian and staff nutritionist for Total cereal.

Hydrogenation is a process of solidifying vegetable oils to form fats that are harder at room temperature, such as stick margarines and shortenings. Hardness of fat is important in preparing many food items, such as baked goods, sauces and dressings, because it provides a pleasing taste and texture. And a fat, such as margarine, is far more appealing than oil as a spread for toast. At the same time, however, fats that are hydrogenated, or made more solid, become more saturated and not similar to other saturated fats in the body.

Hydrogenated vegetable fats vary in their degree of saturation. The softer the margarine or shortening,

the less hydrogenated it is. For example, tub margarines are less hydrogenated than stick margarines. Squeeze margarines are even less hydrogenated.

Highly hydrogenated vegetable fat needs to be accounted for in the diet, as saturated fat, concludes Gunkler, and no more than 10 percent of total calories should come from this type of fat.

Whole-Grain Foods are "In." The growing popularity of whole-grain foods is a positive change in the diet of America, says Mary Helen Gunkler, registered dietitian and staff nutritionist for Total cereal. Here are some easy ways to make sure you're getting plenty of whole-grain foods in meals and snacks throughout the day.

• **Breakfast** — Use whole-grain puffed cereal in soups and main dish salads. Make sandwiches with whole-grain bread and buns.

• **Lunch** — Include whole-grain pasta and rice in side dishes and main dishes. Serve whole-grain rolls.

• **Dinner** — For dessert, try this simple recipe featuring a delicious cereal topping.

CRUNCH-TOPPED PARFAITS

3 cups whole grain Total cereal, slightly crushed



Healthy parfaits: These crunch-topped parfaits feature fresh fruit and yogurt plus a delicious cereal topping, made with whole grain cereal.

2 tablespoons margarine or butter
2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons peanut butter

Heat oven to 300 degrees. Place cereal in large bowl. Heat margarine in 1-quart saucepan until melted; add brown sugar and peanut butter. Cook and stir until well blended; remove from

heat. Stir into cereal until cereal is completely coated. Spread evenly in ungreased jelly-roll pan, 15½ x 10½ x 1 inch. Bake 10 to 15 minutes, stirring once or twice, until golden brown. Cool completely. Store in airtight container. 3½ cups topping.

Layer cut-up fresh fruit, yogurt and Cereal-Crunch Topping in each of 6 parfait glasses.

Springtime dinner salad features beef

AP — Put more sizzle into a springtime dinner salad by featuring well-seasoned steak strips, freshly cooked in your microwave oven.

Meat tenderizer keeps the beef juicy and tender. Vivid colors in this slightly spicy salad come from hominy, green pepper, olives, lettuce and tomatoes.

MEXICAN BEEF SALAD

½ pound beef top round steak
¼ teaspoon unseasoned instant meat tenderizer
3 tablespoons cooking oil
3 tablespoons vinegar
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon dried oregano, crushed

¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon ground red pepper
One 16-ounce can yellow hominy, drained

1 small onion, sliced and separated into rings
1 green pepper, sliced into rings

½ cup sliced pitted ripe olives
4 cups torn lettuce
¼ cup halved cherry tomatoes

Lettuce leaves
½ cup finely shredded Monterey Jack cheese (2 ounces)

Partially freeze meat. Slice the

meat across the grain into bite-size strips. Sprinkle meat tenderizer over meat. In a 1½-quart casserole combine beef and 1 tablespoon of the cooking oil.

Cover with waxed paper. Cook on 100 percent power (high) for 3 to 5 minutes or until meat is done, stirring every 2 minutes. Remove meat, reserving drippings in dish.

Add remaining cooking oil to drippings. Stir in vinegar, salt, cumin, oregano, garlic powder and red pepper. Cook, uncovered, on high about 30 seconds or until bubbly. Add meat, hominy, onion, green pepper and olives. Toss gently to coat.

In a large mixing bowl combine meat mixture, torn lettuce and cherry tomatoes. Toss gently to coat.

Spoon mixture onto lettuce-lined plates. Sprinkle with cheese. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Low-wattage oven: For meat strips, cook on high for 5 to 7 minutes.

Nutrition information per serving: 335 cal., 20 g fat, 22 g pro., 18 g carbs., 872 mg sodium, 517 mg potassium, U.S. RDA: 16 percent calcium, 24 percent iron, 22 percent vit. A, 68 percent vit. C, 14 percent thiamine, 18 percent riboflavin, 21 percent niacin.

Give your cupboards, refrigerator a nutritional overhaul



LOIS THIELEKE

exercise program to go along with this fresh start of healthy eating even with a hurried schedule. The nutri-

tional overhaul should start in the kitchen.

There should be plenty of rice and pasta, they are naturally low in fat and rich in complex carbohydrates that release plenty of energy. Whole wheat pasta and brown rice will also add fiber and new interesting flavors to hot or cold salads. Replace sugar-coated cereals with unsweetened, ready to eat varieties. Read the label to make sure they contain at least two grams of fiber, eight grams or less sugar and less than two grams of fat per serving.

Check out those snack foods in your cupboard. Crackers made with lard, coconut, palm oils or shortenings have to go. In their place have high-fiber, low fat versions such as rice or barley cakes, molasses toast, flat breads, matzo, rye crisps and whole grain wafers. Chips of all varieties are best avoided or eaten sparingly because of the fat, calories and sodium. Pretzels are low in fat but high in salt, so stock up on the unsalted brands. For the sweet tooth, buy cookies with less fat and sugar. Reach for graham crackers,

animal crackers, gingersnaps and fig bars. Eat snack foods with discretion.

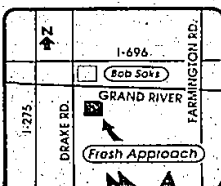
Condiments, oils and canned foods may need to be cleaned out, too. Use fresh or dried herbs and spices instead of high sodium flavor enhancers like soy or Worcestershire sauces and seasoned salts. For cooking use polyunsaturated oils, like safflower, sunflower or corn, or monounsaturated oils, olive and canola. Many canned or dried soups

and broths are high in sodium so, replace with the sodium reduced or low sodium versions. If you do not think you like these lower sodium soups, add a few herbs and spices to make up for the less salt taste. Our modern grocery stores have fresh fruits and vegetables available year round so there is no real need for lots of canned of these. Buy the no salt versions of canned vegetables and the no sugar cans of fruits if you need to buy the canned varieties.

The freezer also needs to be checked for unhealthy food choices. Get rid of any breaded or fried frozen fillets and buy meats with less than 1,000 milligrams of sodium, 300 to 400 calories and about three grams fat per 100 calories. Premium ice creams need to be replaced with lower fat "lite" ice cream, and low fat frozen yogurts or frozen desserts made with fat substitutes. Good choices also include frozen fruit or juice bars with no added sugar, sorbets and fruit leers.

Fresh Approach

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