

Sandwich, snacks so good kids will gobble them up

Recipes from Rozolena Karanec, a dietitian with the Henry Ford Heart and Vascular Institute.

CHICKEN-IN-A-POCKET SANDWICH

2 ounces Neufchatel cheese, cut into chunks
1 green pepper, seeded and diced
4 to 5 green onions, diced, including green tops
2 to 3 stalks celery, diced
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder (optional)
12 ounces cooked, skinless, boneless chicken breast, diced
2 tablespoons reduced-calorie ranch dressing

2 rounds of pita bread, cut in halves crosswise to form 4 pocket sandwiches
1 cup shredded lettuce or spinach leaves
1/4 cup alfalfa sprouts
1 to 2 carrots, finely shredded
1 ounce cheddar cheese, shredded

In a 1-quart microwave-safe dish, combine Neufchatel cheese, green pepper, green onions, celery and garlic powder. Microwave on low just until cheese softens, about 1 minute. If you don't have a microwave, heat in the top of a gently simmering double boiler until cheese softens.
Stir cooked chicken and ranch dressing into microwave dish or double boiler. In microwave oven,

cook on low 1 more minute. In double boiler, stir and cook until heated through, about 3 or 4 minutes. Cool.
Line each pita half with 1/4 of the shredded lettuce or spinach and sprouts. Add 1/4 of the chicken mixture to each. Sprinkle each sandwich with 1/4 of the shredded carrots and cheddar cheese. Yield 4 sandwiches.
Calories 295, fat 10 g, sodium 327 mg.

GRANOLA BARS

Vegetable or cooking spray
3 1/2 cups quick-cooking rolled oats
1 cup raisins
1/4 cup dry apricots, chopped
1/4 cup nuts, shelled, chopped
2 egg whites

1/2 cup margarine, melted
1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/4 cup honey
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Spray a 16 by 10-inch jelly roll pan with vegetable cooking spray. Place oats on jelly roll pan. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until light golden brown. Remove from oven and set aside on rack to cool.

In a large bowl, combine baked oats, raisins, apricots and nuts; mix well. In a separate medium bowl, place egg whites and beat slightly. Add margarine, brown sugar, honey and vanilla. Add egg mixture to oats mixture and mix well.

Firmly press oats mixture into prepared jelly roll pan. Bake 20

minutes. Remove from oven and set aside to cool. When completely cooled, cut into bars or break into pieces. Store bars in a tightly covered container in a cool, dry place or refrigerate. Yield 30 bars.
Calories 94, fat 3 g, sodium 68 mg. Thirty percent of calories from fat.

PRALINE POPCORN

10 cups popped popcorn
1/4 cup pecan halves
1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 tablespoons reduced-calorie maple syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla
In large bowl combine popcorn and pecan halves.

In 1-quart microwave-safe bowl, combine brown sugar, oil and maple syrup. Microwave on high for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until mixture comes to a boil, stirring occasionally. Stir in vanilla.

Quickly pour syrup over popcorn mixture; toss until evenly coated. Transfer half of mixture to 12 by 8-inch (2-quart) microwave-safe dish sprayed with vegetable cooking spray. Microwave on high for 2 to 3 minutes or until popcorn is evenly coated and glazed, stirring every minute. Popcorn will become crisp as it cools. Using same dish, repeat with remaining popcorn mixture. Store in tightly covered container. Yield: 11 cups.

Calories 110, fat 2 g, sodium 11 mg. Percent of calories from fat 16 percent.

Dietitian offers tips to moms

Moms want to pack healthy foods. Kids want to eat junk food. But what's at stake is more than just lunch — it's a lifetime of eating patterns.

"Even though kids want candy and pop for lunch, it's important that they eat a balanced diet to help with their rapid growth and development," said Rozolena Karanec, a dietitian with the Henry Ford Heart and Vascular Institute.

"Good eating habits start in childhood. That's why it's important for parents to find nutritious and delicious foods that kids will eat."

One of the best ways to get kids to buy into a healthier lunch program, according to Karanec, is to include them in the selection and preparation of their school lunches.

For example, offer kids several healthy food choices and allow

Offer kids several healthy food choices and allow them to make their final selection.

them to make their final selection. Let them create their own sandwich by offering a choice of skinless turkey, chicken, water-packed tuna or lean roast beef. They can also decide on mustard, ketchup or low-fat mayonnaise and a variety of vegetables like tomatoes, lettuce or alfalfa sprouts.

Make the foods more fun and colorful. Pack a variety of colorful raw vegetables cut into fun shapes such as cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, celery with low-fat cream cheese, sliced red and green

peppers or other favorite veggies.

Include nonfat dressing as a dip.

Alternate different low-fat cheese cubes with fresh vegetables. The cheese should contain no more than 2-3 grams of fat per ounce serving.

For special snacks, pack vanilla wafers, graham crackers, fig bars, low-fat granola bars, pretzels, popcorn or low-fat yogurt.

Spread a little peanut butter on sliced apples and sprinkle cinnamon on other fresh fruit slices.

Include good beverage choices such as skim milk, skim chocolate milk or fruit juice to complete lunch.

Include colorful napkins and plasticware to make lunches more appealing.

Always use an insulated lunch bag or container to keep cold foods cold.

These are so good they win prizes

Enchiladas Fantasticas, a crowd-pleasing main dish with zesty fiesta flavors, has garnered Grand Prize honors in the 1994 Pace Picante Sauce "Pick Up The Pace" recipe contest.

The enchiladas' savory filling combines ground turkey, spinach and cream cheese with Pace Picante Sauce. Brightly topped with tomatoes, the enchiladas bake to flavor perfection in short order.

A last-minute sprinkling of cheese completes the festive dish. To serve, embellish the enchiladas with the desired optional garnishes, or pass the toppings and let everyone "customize" their own according to personal preference.

The best-of-contest prize goes to Rox Keimig, a 29-year-old dental office coordinator from Guymon, Okla., for her winning way with enchiladas.

The enchiladas' savory filling combines ground turkey, spinach and cream cheese with picante sauce.

ENCHILADAS FANTASTICAS

1 pound ground turkey
2 cups Pace Picante Sauce
1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed, squeezed dry and chopped
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 package (8 ounces) regular or light cream cheese, cubed
12 flour tortillas (7-8 inch), warmed
1 can (14 1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes in juice
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

Optional toppings: Shredded lettuce, ripe olive slices, avocado slices, sour cream.

In 10-inch non-stick skillet, cook turkey until it loses its pink color, breaking into small pieces with spoon. Add 1 cup of the picante sauce, spinach, 1 1/2 teaspoons of the cumin and salt. Cook and stir 5 minutes or until most of liquid has evaporated. Add cream cheese, stirring just until melted; remove from heat.

Spoon about 1/4 cup filling down center of each tortilla; roll up and place seam side down in lightly greased 13 by 9-inch baking dish. Combine tomatoes, remaining 1 cup picante sauce and remaining 1/2 teaspoon cumin; mix well. Spoon over enchiladas.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until hot. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese; return to oven 2 minutes to melt cheese. Top as desired and serve with additional picante sauce. Makes 6 servings.

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