

HOME SENSE



LOIS THIELEKE

Consider an oil change for better health

There is a war on fat. Good fat versus bad fat, monounsaturated versus polyunsaturated versus saturated, and health claims versus type versus the truth. What are we supposed to believe?

During the past few years, the media has reported on scientific studies that suggest that monounsaturated fats, such as olive oil, may decrease the risk of heart disease. Maybe it's time to think about an oil change in your kitchen.

Studies that included countries that primarily use olive oil showed they had a lower incidence of breast cancer. There are also studies that suggest olive oil may reduce blood cholesterol.

Sources

Olive oil is a monounsaturated fat and affects the body the least. Monounsaturated fat sources include olive, peanut and canola oils.

Polyunsaturated fats include corn, safflower, soybeans and sesame seeds.

Saturated fats are from animal sources such as meats and milk products. There are three vegetable oils that are highly saturated - coconut, palm and palm kernel. Saturated fats can boost cholesterol and cause heart disease.

No oil or salad fat has just one kind of fatty acid so whatever fat you choose, use it sparingly. All vegetable oils contain about 120 calories per tablespoon. Reducing fats, even in the good kind, reduces calories, too.

Don't be fooled by the words "light" on olive oil. It means the oil is light in flavor, not calories.

Flavors

Olive produce a different kind of oil depending on when they were picked and how they were pressed. The flavors are everything from a green spicy oil to light and mild.

Extra virgin has a pleasant aroma and is strong but not overpowering. Extra virgin oil is the first pressing of the olives. The more pressings the lives have gone through, the lower the grade of olive oil.

Olive oil can replace other vegetable oil in cooking products, but if you want the flavor to come through, choose extra virgin olive oil. The price of olive oils can range from expensive to very expensive. Price has little to do with flavor: Buy a small portion until you are familiar with the flavor.

Use extra virgin or superfine blended oils:

- For dunking slices of fresh bread
- For salad vinaigrettes
- Sprinkled over tomatoes and onions with basil
- Drizzled on raw or cooked vegetables
- Drizzled over baked potatoes (add some Parmesan cheese and fresh herbs)

Extra virgin olive oil should be used in cold dishes or added to a dish that is hot, otherwise you could lose the flavor of the oil.

Don't use olive - or any other oil - in pastry unless it's called for in a recipe. Oil coats flour particles, preventing the water-flour interaction that is necessary for the development of gluten. Pastries made with oil tend to be very tender, yet crumbly and have a greasy feel in your mouth.

Olive oil has a low smoke point, so don't use it for deep-frying. The smoke point of a fat is the temperature at which the fat "burns" or is overheated and gives off a blue gas that can irritate mucous membranes (and set off your smoke detector). Use olive oil for sautéing or frying.

Please see **NEWS**, B2

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Hearty soups & stews
- Cooking with Girl Scout cookies,

COOKING FOR THE CLAN



SAVVY MOMS SATISFY THE TUMMIES OF BIG FAMILIES

By SANDRA DALKA-PRYSDY
SPECIAL WRITER

What's a mother to do when it comes to satisfying the taste buds of a whole bunch of individuals? That's the challenge that two mothers face daily. Luckily, both are successful in meeting this demand.

Nancy Sovran of Southfield is the mother of seven children ages 3 to 12. Sarah Gijbers of Beverly Hills has five daughters who range in age from 18 months to 9. Both mothers have some finicky eaters in their broods. However, both prepare only one dinner each day for their families.

"The picky eaters can select what they want from what is offered," said Sovran. "There may be some whining, especially when I try a new recipe, but the children have learned to eat what is put before them. However, I do try to make dishes that I know will please the majority."

Gijbers also makes dishes that please the most members of her family. However, she too sometimes hears a few groans when she serves something new for dinner.

"I encourage the girls to take a few bites and try the dishes put before them," said Gijbers. "If they don't like one particular offering, they don't have to eat it. They can fill up on the other available dishes."

Sovran and her husband, Andrew, a financial analyst at the Detroit Medical Center, learned

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- Nancy Sovran

early into their parenthood days that majority rule is the way to go when it comes to feeding a large family.

"You can't please everyone all the time, but we found - through trial and error - certain dishes such as stew, spaghetti and chicken casserole that appeal to most of the kids," said Sovran. However, two of their children offer the biggest challenge when it comes to foods.

Sarah, 12, the Sovran's eldest child, doesn't like her food to touch the other foods on her plate. She likes everything to be separate and because of this, she avoids casseroles.

"This is my fault," said Sovran. "I also keep my foods separate. She's acquired my fetish."

The Sovran's youngest child, Hope, 3, also has special needs. Born with spina bifida and paralyzed from the waist down, Hope is currently being weaned from a feeding tube and is trying regular foods for the first time.

"Her favorite food is Chee-tos," said Sovran. "She asks for these all the time, even for breakfast. However, we're trying to get her to eat other and more nutritious foods

and we're having some success." The Sovran's other children are, Joe, 10, Annie, 8, Mary Kate, 7, Dominic, 5, and Molly, 4.

Gijbers Family

The Gijbers's middle child, Annie, 6, is their fussiest eater. "She doesn't like fruits or vegetables," said Gijbers. "However, I don't force them on her. I don't like to make food an issue. Battles over food could lead to other problems, even eating disorders. So we just encourage her to taste these foods. She's now beginning to like salads."

The Gijbers's other children are Deannah, 9, Remy, 7, Demery, 2 1/2, and Emma 18 months.

Spousal support

Sovran's husband cooks dinner often. In addition, he is the family's main lunch maker. "He makes the kids' lunches each night before going to bed. It's quite a production to watch as he lines up slices of bread for sandwiches and the fillings and fruits to accommodate each of the children's tastes," said Sovran. "He accomplishes this task quickly and well. He has it down to a science. Also, the kids are great helpers with the meals. Some are assigned to set the table, while others help with such tasks as pouring the milk or cutting up vegetables."

Gijbers also gets help in the kitchen. Her husband, Brian, an attorney in private practice, often plans and prepares dinners, especially on Sundays.

"He does a good job with the main course," she said. "I usually

help with the side dishes, and the girls make the salad. It's a nice family activity."

These two mothers of large families have discovered what a "small world" it really is. Four years ago they ran into each other while enrolling their youngsters in the preschool program at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs School in Beverly Hills.

"We were classmates ourselves years ago at St. Bede's School in Southfield," said Sovran. "We hadn't seen each other for years and had lost touch. Now our children are classmates and friends."

Reuniting, and seeing each other often at school functions, has provided them with a bonus. They share their kid-pleasing recipes, as well as tips for successfully raising so many children.

"It's good to have a friend who understands the same demands that you have," said Sovran. "Large families are a blessing, but also a challenge. And not just when it comes to feeding them."

We want to hear from you. How do you get dinner on the table, yet satisfy the appetites of all of your children? How do you encourage your children to eat vegetables, fruits and other things that are good for them? Is there a kid-friendly way to prepare cauliflower?

Send, fax, or e-mail your recipes and suggestions to Ken Abramczyk, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, fax (734) 591-7279 or e-mail kabramczyk@oe.homecomm.net

See recipes inside

Hearty white bean chili a healthy alternative

Tips

- Keep canned broth in the refrigerator so the fat will congeal and be easy to lift off the surface before using. Who wants the extra calories?
- To freeze chili or soup, place a freezer-weight plastic bag inside a bowl, pour in chili or soup, then freeze. When solid, lift the plastic bag out of the bowl, seal and return to freezer for up to 3 months.
- For fast meals, freeze chili and soups in individual portions to be heated in minutes in the microwave.
- If you're going to be away from home longer than the cooking time, plug your slow cooker into an automatic timer. Set the timer to start the cooker while you're gone. Always place chilled food into the cooker that has a delayed starting time. Never let the food stand for more than 2 hours before the cooking starts.

Information from "The Food Lover's Companion," by Sharon Tyler Herbst, (Horse Books & New York, 1994)

By KEN ABRAMCZYK
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Sometimes change is good. Sheila Radtke of Westland adapted her chili recipe to what she considered a "more interesting" dish with ground turkey, a healthy alternative to traditional chili made with beef.

"People are shying away from red meat, but they have started coming back to it," Radtke said about her "recipe to share." "People are eating healthier, and they say you should eat more beans. This chili is something you can make in a Crock-pot and eat it whenever."

Radtke recommends that the chili is best if refrigerated, then reheated.

WHITE CHILI

- 1 1/2 pounds ground turkey
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup of diced green pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1 teaspoon crushed chili peppers
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic granules

- 3 (15-ounce) cans white beans
- 1 cup chicken broth
- Salt and white pepper to taste

In a four-quart saucepan, brown the first five ingredients. Add two cans of beans (undrained). Drain the third can of beans, then blend the beans in a food processor to use for thickening the chili. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes.

Everyone knows the best recipes are the ones you share. Send us your favorite original recipe, and if it's chosen to be featured in Recipe to Share on the third Sunday of the month in Taste, we'll send you a cookbook.

Send recipes for consideration in Recipe to Share to Ken Abramczyk, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, (734) 591-7279, or e-mail kabramczyk@oe.homecomm.net

Please include a daytime phone number and the best time to call, so we can contact you about your recipe. Try to be specific with recipe details such as can and package sizes.

Does anyone use their grill in this weather?

OK, so we've had temperatures hovering around zero, and a few inches of snow on the ground. Summer seems like a long time ago, and so do Fourth of July barbecues, but we were just wondering:

Does anyone use their grill in this kind of weather?

If you do, we want to hear from you.

■ E-mail your favorite winter grill recipes, and tips for staying fired up when it's cold outside, to Ken Abramczyk at kabramczyk@oe.homecomm.net

■ Or fax recipes to: (734) 591-7279

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■ For questions, call (734) 963-2112

