Ask the Expert:
How Can I Cut Down on Added Sugars?
Written by Nicolette Mehas, Research Assistant in the Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University

Added sugars are included as ingredients in foods during processing and are different than the sugars that naturally occur in foods like fruit or milk. Foods and beverages high in added sugars include soft drinks, sports drinks, cookies, cakes, and ice cream. Added sugars are also present in sweetened yogurt, grains, cereals, salad dressings, sauces, and frozen meals.

U.S. adults get an average of 13% of their total daily calories from added sugars and this estimate is even higher for children. The Dietary Guidelines recommend limiting added sugars to less than 10% of daily calorie intake. The American Heart Association has a stricter limit of 100 calories or 6 teaspoons daily for women and 150 calories or 9 teaspoons daily for men. A lower intake of added sugars is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.

The new nutrition labels, which will be required on foods by 2018, will list the amount of added sugars separately. On current nutrition labels, you can look for certain terms in the ingredients section to find added sugars, such as: dextrose, fructose, sucrose, and others ending in “ose”, high fructose corn syrup, molasses, honey, and numerous others. Be extra cautious if there are multiple sweeteners on the label or sugars are near the top of the ingredient list.

Try to replace added sugars with spices or other foods that add flavor and nutrients. Cutting out a large amount of sugar at once may be difficult. Try to decrease your intake of added sugars slowly, and gradually aim to reach the recommended intake.

QUICK TIPS:
- Choose unsweetened oatmeal and cereal and add fresh bananas or berries.
- Start by replacing one soft drink or sweetened juice daily with water.
- Add fresh lemon or lime juice to water for flavor.
- Replace sugary snacks with fruits, veggies, and healthy fats.

Food Safety:
Reducing Food Waste

Written by Sasha Harrison, Undergraduate Student in the Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University

In the U.S. in 2010, 31% of the food supply was not eaten. Food waste is a major contributor to landfills, harmful to the environment, and a waste of money and resources! There are several steps you can take to throw away less food in your home. The first step is to plan your meals in advance, ideally, using some foods that you already have in your fridge or pantry. By “shopping” your own home first you can be sure that you are not spending money on something you already have. After planning your menu, you can make a grocery list of the items you need.

Storing food properly will improve the shelf-life. Leftovers should be kept in airtight containers or wrapped tightly with plastic wrap. Most leftovers can be refrigerated for three to four days. Pantry staples like dried beans, rice, flour and oats keep best in airtight containers in a dry cabinet or cupboard. Fruits and vegetables can be tricky to store as many give off gases that will ripen and spoil produce stored nearby. Keep fruits and vegetables in separate containers. Bananas, tomatoes, and apples should be stored on their own. Older or slightly wilted produce can be used in cooked dishes or smoothies, but be sure to avoid produce that is moldy or slimy.

By paying attention to the food waste in your own household you can adjust future purchases. Try tracking you what you throw away for a few weeks. If you consistently notice the same foods being thrown away, try purchasing less of those items or finding new recipes that incorporate them. Taking steps to reduce food waste can help you save money, eat healthier, and live more sustainably.

Sticking to the list may help to reduce impulse purchases. Try to buy ingredients that can be used in multiple dishes throughout the week. Planning to have a leftover dinner during the week will also help you reduce wasting uneaten foods while saving you time cooking on a busy night!

Comfort Foods Redesigned
Written by Sasha Harrison, Undergraduate Student in the Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University

By making simple changes to classic comfort food recipes you can cut down on fat, sodium, and refined carbohydrates and still enjoy the foods you love. One easy change is using low-fat dairy. Many cheeses are available in reduced fat versions. Greek yogurt is an excellent replacement for sour cream or butter and adds protein while reducing fat. Other ways to lighten up comfort foods include choosing leaner cuts of meats, using less meat, and replacing meat with dried beans.

To add delicious flavor to dishes use more spices and less salt. Sodium is hidden in ingredients like canned vegetables and broth. Using low-sodium broth, making your own broth with vegetable scraps or bones, or rinsing canned foods can reduce sodium in your diet.

Whole grain versions of bread and pasta have more fiber and minerals than refined grains and will help you feel full and maintain a healthy weight. Incorporating vegetables into comfort foods like casseroles, soups, and pastas allows you to add fiber, vitamins, and minerals without adding many additional calories. By modifying recipes you can create healthier comfort foods for you and your family to enjoy.

Sources: https://gaston.ces.ncsu.edu/2016/02/comfort-food-healthy-makeovers/, http://www.choosemyplate.gov; Picture: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/

### Spinach Mac & Cheese

**Ingredients** (8 servings)
- 1 box whole grain pasta
- 2 tbsp butter
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 ½ cups skim milk
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 large handfuls fresh spinach
- salt and pepper

**Directions:**
1. Boil a pot of water for the pasta and cook as directed.
2. In a separate pan, melt the butter.
3. Add the flour in and mix to form a paste. Mix in ½ cup of the skim milk to form a thick sauce. Add in the rest of the milk and combine.
4. Mix in the cheese, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Stir until completely mixed.
5. Add in the spinach and let it cook for about 3-5 minutes

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### Honey Cayenne Chicken Tenders

**Ingredients** (4 servings)
- 1 package boneless skinless chicken breast
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 3 cups crushed corn flakes

**Directions:**
1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Line a baking sheet with foil and place a cookie cooking rack on top of the baking sheet.
3. Combine honey, cayenne pepper, black pepper and salt in a microwave safe bowl and microwave for 30 seconds.
4. Cut the chicken breast into chicken-tender sizes pieces. Coat them in the honey mixture and then lay them into a bowl with the crushed corn flakes and coat completely.
5. Lay the breaded tenders on the cookie cool rack on top of the baking sheet.
6. Flip the tenders over about halfway through, after around 10 minutes of baking.
7. Bake for an additional 10-15 minutes or until the internal temperature of the thickest tender reaches 165°F.

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**Spinach Mac & Cheese**
Per serving: 302 Calories, 8g Total Fat, 5g Total Saturated Fat, 287mg Sodium, 45g Total Carbohydrate, 7g Total Sugars, 4g Total Dietary Fiber, 14g Total Protein

**Honey Cayenne Chicken Tenders**
Per serving: 345 Calories, 7g Total Fat, 1.3g Total Saturated Fat, 274mg Sodium, 36g Total Carbohydrate, 19.5g Total Sugars, 0g Total Dietary Fiber, 49g Total Protein

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Underlining denotes a TEFAP commodity ingredient
June is PTSD Awareness Month

Written by Nicolette Mehas, Research Assistant in the Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University

June is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month. PTSD is a mental health condition that can develop after an individual experiences traumatic events. Everyone reacts to trauma differently so what causes trauma in one person may differ from what causes trauma in another. Types of traumatic events include combat, physical or sexual abuse, serious accidents, and natural disasters.

Over half of all Americans have had a traumatic event in their lives, but not everyone will develop PTSD. PTSD can cause you to relive the event and have anxiety and persistent distressing thoughts that may last months or longer after an event. If you or someone you know has symptoms of PTSD talk to a healthcare provider and find a program that is right for you. You can visit https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/ to search for treatment providers. Veterans can find a provider by visiting http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/PTSD.asp.