Trim The Fat

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Everyone knows the importance of reducing the amount of fat consumed. The simple fact is that diets high in total fat have been directly linked to health problems such as obesity, diabetes and some types of cancer. In addition, too much saturated fat and trans fat raise an individual's blood cholesterol, and high cholesterol increases the risk of heart disease.

To maintain good heart health, saturated fat should not exceed seven percent of the daily total caloric intake. For a 2,000 calorie diet, that seven percent translates into approximately 16 grams of saturated fat. Trans fat should be avoided as much as possible.

Changing a lifetime of eating habits doesn't happen immediately; however, change is absolutely possible.

MEATS, POULTRY, FISH Always trim visible fat from meat, and remove skin from chicken before cooking.

Braise: This slow cooking method will tenderize meats, remove fat and add flavor. To "braise" is to cook in liquid in a covered container. Braising can be done on top of the stove (over a low flame in a covered pan) or slowly in a covered pot in a 350º oven.After the food is cooked, refrigerate, and then skim the fat.

Roast, Bake, Broil: Cooking with dry heat. Grill: Place meat on a rack allowing the fat to run off. Try a grill basket for fish.Use a cast iron skillet or other heavy cookware that conducts heat slowly.Wipe the pan with an oiled paper towel. Curing the pan turns it into a "non-stick" pan.

VEGETABLES Instead of adding butter, heavy cream sauces, or melted cheese to vegetables, try these low-fat options.

Grill: Use a grill basket for fresh vegetables, corn or potatoes.
Roast: Lightly brush olive oil on sliced vegetables, such as squash, eggplant or tomatoes, and roast in oven. Toss cubed sweet potatoes in honey, or toss potato wedges with rosemary and a small amount of olive oil and roast in oven.
Steam: Steam fresh vegetables, and toss with chopped herbs and a squeeze of lemon juice.
Blanch: Blanch green beans, asparagus or carrots in flavored, low-sodium broths.
Stir-fry: Combine snow peas,mushrooms, soybeans, broccoli florets and julienned carrots with minced garlic and a teaspoon of olive oil or a healthy nut oil.

CITRUS CHICKEN

- 2 chicken breasts, boneless, skinless (4 ounces each)
- 3 Tablespoons green onions, chopped
- 5 teaspoons honey
- 4 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 Tablespoon orange juice
- 1 Tablespoon lime juice
- 1/8 teaspoon anise
- 1/8 teaspoon thyme
- 1/8 teaspoon sage
- 1/8 teaspoon rosemary
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Combine green onions, honey, lemon, orange and lime juices, anise, thyme, sage, rosemary, salt, and pepper. Pour marinade over chicken. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Grill chicken, or bake in a 350° oven for 25 minutes.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION per 4 ounce chicken breast: 204 calories, 26 g protein, 18 g carbohydrate, 3 g fat, 70 mg cholesterol, 159 mg sodium

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