



Healthful meals even children will like

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Obesity has become epidemic in the United States, and it's no longer an adult problem. Fast foods, salty and sweet snacks and soda are staples in children's diets, and kids are spending more time in front of the television and computer than playing outside. What's a parent to do?

Janice Newell Bissex and Liz Weiss, both dietitians and mothers of young children, combined their personal mealtime experiences with their nutrition expertise to write "The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers" (Broadway, \$15.95), a book of strategies and recipes for healthful eating.

The women take a sensible approach. Newell Bissex explains that she follows a 90/10 rule: If her family eats healthy 90 percent of the time, she doesn't sweat the other 10 percent. She offers a variety of good foods and lets the kids choose what they'll eat. That's the kind of reasoning that permeates the book.

Their makeover begins with a five-step plan for making changes, including the suggestion to turn off the TV and eat together as a family. As working mothers who understand time constraints, they offer ways to organize the kitchen to cut prep time.

They also recommend brands of prepared and convenience foods that are family-friendly yet adhere to good nutritional standards.

Although many of the recipes are mealtime classics--chili, casseroles, sloppy Joes, lasagna, meatloaf, meatballs and even carrot cake--the dietitians adapted them to reduce fat and sodium and boost fiber and vitamin content.

Every recipe begins with a "Moms make it over big" list of the added or substituted ingredients and their nutritional bonus as well as before-and-after nutrition information.

At the least, this book will provide the family cook with a new outlook on mealtime without spending extra time in the kitchen. The recipes require no extraordinary cooking skills and keep prep time to a minimum.

Confetti chicken wraps

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Yield: 6 servings

Before its makeover, this chicken wrap recipe had double the fat and almost twice the sodium content. The authors of "The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers" added bell pepper and corn for

their vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fiber. Using skinless, boneless chicken breast helps to lower the saturated fat content.

1 tablespoon canola oil
1 large orange bell pepper, diced or cut into thin, 1-inch strips
1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, sliced into thin strips
1/2 to 1 teaspoon each: ground cumin, chili powder
1 can (15 1/2 ounces) pinto beans, drained, rinsed
1 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese
3/4 cup salsa
6 flour tortillas
1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream, optional

1. Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat; add the bell pepper and corn. Cook, stirring often, until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the chicken, cumin and chili powder; cook until the chicken is no longer pink, 4-5 minutes. Stir in the beans, cheese and salsa; cook until heated through and the cheese melts, about 2 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, stack the tortillas on a microwave-safe plate, uncovered; heat in the microwave until warmed through, 30-45 seconds. Assemble by placing the chicken mixture down the center of each tortilla. Wrap burrito-style; serve with sour cream, if desired.

Nutrition information per serving:

419 calories, 27% of calories from fat, 13 g fat, 4 g saturated fat, 55 mg cholesterol, 49 g carbohydrates, 29 g protein, 630 mg sodium, 7 g fiber

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