

PENNY SAVER NEWS

FAX: 932-5261

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BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776
e-mail:makeith@mail.ifas.ufl.edu**Low Carb Potatoes?!**

With all the low-carb this and low-carb that coming out recently, you might wonder if there really is such a thing as a low-carb potato, or is this just more hype and advertising? After all, potatoes are mostly carbohydrate! This time, there really is science behind the labeling. And yes, the SunLite™ brand of potatoes do have less carbohydrate than regular potatoes. They're not calorie free though, so don't go overboard! Here's how much of a difference there is.

A standard serving of potato is three and a half to four ounces. Most 'medium' potatoes weigh about 5 to 5 ½ ounces, not quite two 'official servings'. Most of us easily eat a whole potato (or two or three!) at a meal, instead of one serving. So remember, these numbers are for one whole, medium potato, not a serving.

In the five ounces (more or less) of medium potato, a Russet will have about 25 to 30 grams of starch, or carbohydrate (carbs). One of the new low carb potatoes of the same size only has 18 grams of carbohydrate. That is a significant difference, almost 30% less. That means that where a Russet potato that weighs about 5 ounces gives you 117 calories, the new potatoes only give us 87 calories. Is this enough to fit in a low carb diet? Probably not, but it's better than regular potatoes for all of us who are or ought to watch our calories!

What's there instead of the starch? Water. These potatoes have more moisture than regular potatoes. Water has no calories, water is good for us. The protein is about the same, so is the amount of fiber and minerals. The only significant difference is the amount of starch.

Since we don't eat our potatoes raw, are they any different after we cook them? When they are baked, the SunLites are very moist. We tried some in a class, and found that they needed very little butter. Some of us used no butter at all and were quite satisfied with them. The flavor was excellent.

Boiled SunLite potatoes were also very tasty just plain. We didn't try mashing them, but the researchers who developed them say that they make very light mashed potatoes. They are moist enough that they can be whipped without having to add cream or butter. If you leave out the cream, or use skim milk, you can really reduce the calories.

What these potatoes will not be very good for is frying. When potatoes are fried in oil, the moisture is fried out. All the space that used to be water is taken over by the oil. Potatoes with less moisture and more starch are preferred for making commercial french fries for that reason. Since these potatoes have more moisture, when they are fried they will absorb more oil. You'll end up with heavy, greasy fries with more calories than regular fries. But, if you're watching your calories, you aren't going to be frying potatoes anyway, right? Right!

SunLite potatoes are on sale in some local groceries. The ones I found were more expensive than regular potatoes. A yellow version, SunLite Gold, similar to the Yukon Gold variety, should show up in the groceries soon. They are all Florida grown, so buying a bag of these helps our local farming economy, as well as our calorie count. Not a bad deal at all.

This week's recipe is - what else - New Potato Salad! Lots of veggies and low carb potatoes besides - enjoy!

New Potato Salad

1 pound small potatoes

½ pound small green beans (or frozen)

2 tsp black pepper	2 green onions, trimmed and minced
1 Tbsp olive or canola oil	3 small ripe tomatoes
2 Tbsp fresh parsley or basil	1/4 C vinegar (red wine vinegar is best)
3 Tbsp chicken stock	1 bag of salad greens, your choice of type

Wash the potatoes and cut in half or quarters. Boil until just tender, 15-20 min. Boil raw green beans about 10-15 min, or frozen beans until just tender. Drain both and put in large bowl. Add pepper, green onions and oil and mix gently. Cover and refrigerate to cool. Just before serving, add chopped tomato, parsley, vinegar and chicken stock. Mix gently. Spread the salad greens over 6 plates, and distribute the potatoes over the greens. Serves 6.

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