

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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July 14, 2011

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PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776
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We're officially into the second half of the year now. New Year's resolutions are either good new habits or long forgotten by now. But with the fresh new release of the USDA ChooseMyPlate logo and campaign we have a good incentive to start some new healthy living practices. If you haven't seen the new MyPlate logo, you can check it out at www.choosemyplate.gov. There's lots of good information there besides the logo, because along with the plate comes a whole set of tip sheets. Each one has hints, tips and suggestions on how to gently nudge our eating habits further into the healthy side of the scale. Let's take a look at the suggestions for Protein.

The first reaction from a lot of people to changing their protein is "Don't touch my meat!" The USDA is not suggesting that we stop eating meat. But most of us get plenty of protein, maybe even too much in some cases. Most adults need only 5 to 7 ounces of protein a day. An egg is about 1 ounce of protein. Meat the size of a deck of cards is 3 ounces, ¼ cup of beans or peas is 1 ounce, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter is an ounce.

We can eat healthfully and still have meat, but putting more variety into our protein choices would give us a wider range of nutrients. Here are the suggestions from ChooseMyPlate for choosing protein.

- *Vary your protein food choices.* So meat is fine. But get some chicken, pork or seafood along with the beef. Try beans, peas or soy instead of the meat once in awhile. Go nuts with nuts for protein occasionally too. They all provide slightly different nutrients to keep us healthy.

- *Choose seafood twice a week.* Getting a variety of seafood means more nutrition and healthy omega-3 fats with less risk of mercury. Balance shrimp with catfish or trout.
- *Make meat or poultry lean or low fat.* Read labels to choose lean or lower fat cuts of meat. Trim off skin and visible fat, and drain any fat released during cooking.
- *Have an egg.* For the majority of us, one egg a day is not a problem. How you cook it could be a problem if you fry it in bacon or butter, so stick to non-stick pans.
- *Eat plant protein foods more often.* There are so many of kinds of beans, peas and nuts to try there would be no reason to be bored. And many soy products look and taste like meat. They all have plenty of fiber and very little fat.
- *Nuts and seeds* are good choices in moderation. With so many calories nuts need to be limited, but can add crunch to salad or cereal. Choose unsalted or lightly salted.
- *Keep it tasty and healthy.* Use the low-fat cooking methods more often. Grilling, broiling, boiling, roasting and baking add plenty of flavor without adding greasy calories. Skip the breading, that's what soaks up fat. Slow cookers are great for tenderizing tougher but less expensive cuts of meat. Use herbs and spices for different flavors.
- *Make a healthy sandwich.* Roast or bake your own turkey or beef if you want sliced meat for sandwiches. Use peanut or other nut butters or hummus for sandwiches too. Deli and luncheon meats are generally high in salt and fat, tasty but treacherous.
- *Think small when it comes to meat portions.* Use meat for flavoring, not for filling the entire plate. Smaller amounts taste just as good as large servings, and leave more room for other foods.
- *Check the sodium.* Read the food labels. Besides processed and canned foods, salt is added to many brined and flavored meats. Choose carefully to limit your sodium

intake and keep your heart happier.

It's a wide variety of foods that works best to keep us healthy. Try this slow-cooker sausage and beans dinner tonight for something different!

Slow-cooker Turkey and Beans

1 ½ lbs smoked turkey sausage, sliced	1 15-oz can white beans
1 15-oz can black or chili beans	1 15-oz can red kidney beans
1 15-oz can small lima beans	3 cups frozen whole kernel corn
3 cups bottles salsa, hot or mild	1 cup chopped green pepper
1 large onion, diced	1 tsp ground cumin OR 3 bay leaves
1 clove garlic, minced	

Drain and rinse the black, kidney and lima beans. Don't drain the white beans. Mix all ingredients in slow cooker and cook, covered for 6-7 hours on Low, or 3 to 3 ½ hours on High. Serves 6.