

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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After years of going on diets, starving ourselves, skipping the foods we love or the meals we need, it seems that more of us are saying "Enough all ready!" The number of people who say they are 'on a diet' is decreasing in the US. On the other hand, more people are reporting that they are "just trying to eat better."

It is probably a much more sensible way to approach a healthy eating pattern. For one thing, you don't have to start by throwing out half of what's in your refrigerator! Eating better is something you can do one step at a time. Make one change this week, make another one next month, and pretty you will have made some significant improvements in your menu.

Eating better is also something most of us can do without hiring a personal cook. Honestly, can't you think of 3 or 4 things right away that you could change in your diet to 'eat better'? You don't have to do them all at once, but you can certainly identify a few areas where your diet could stand a change.

If you are really strapped and can't think of a thing to do, we'll give you a few ideas here for starters. Pick any one of these ideas and try it for a week or so. You don't have to start with the first, it's no better or worse than the last. Just make one small change in the direction of a better diet today, then stick with it. Here's a start!

Eat beans one day a week. You don't have to give up meat completely, but less meat and more legumes helps cut fat and cholesterol and adds fiber. Canned beans

are quick and easy to use. Rinse them to remove some salt.

Eat breakfast. Even if it's a glass of juice and peanut butter on a wrap as you go out the door, eat something soon after you get up. Your brain will work better and you'll eat less throughout the rest of the day.

Go shopping - get a set of smaller plates. The larger plate you use, the more likely you are to fill it up. A smaller plate will look fuller, satisfying your eyes as well as your stomach with less food.

Put your veggies on the plate first. If you fill your plate at least half full of vegetables, and just use a little meat as seasoning, you'll have a much healthier diet.

Put a rainbow on your plate. The wider variety of colors of fruits and vegetables that you manage to eat in a day or a week, the more nutrients and the more protective ingredients you will be eating.

Choose canned or frozen for out-of-season produce. Fruits and vegetables that are shipped long distances or that sit in the refrigerator for several days may lose significant amounts of some vitamins. Canned or frozen produce is more stable and can be a lot quicker to prepare.

If your family is still using whole milk, switch to 2%. If you're still on 2%, switch to 1%. You can mix whole and 2% (to make 3%) for a couple of weeks to ease the change. Or, try adding a spoonful of non-fat dry milk to skim milk. It will make it look and taste thicker without adding any fat.

Use some whole grains. The whole wheat pasta on the market now is much better than the earlier products were. Whole wheat breads are soft and flavorful.

Try brown rice. The 'instant' rice - it only takes 10 minutes to prepare - is pretty

hard to mess up. You can make half white and half brown in the same amount of time while still adding some good fiber to the menu.

Here's a cool, delicious dessert for a warm summer evening. It's as heavenly for how easy it is to make as it is for its taste. Use brown rice for extra nutrition.

Heavenly Rice

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| 2 cups cold cooked rice | 1 cup tidbits or crushed pineapple |
| ½ cup chopped dates (or raisins) | ½ cup chopped nuts |
| 2 Tbsp sugar or sweetener equivalent | 8 oz carton fat free whipped topping |
| 2 cups mini-marshmallows optional | guava jelly or fresh berries for garnish |

Drain juice from pineapple. Mix all ingredients together except garnish. Chill well.

Drizzle with warmed guava jelly or sprinkle with fresh berries to garnish before serving.

Serves 6 - 8.

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