



## Extreme Pantry Makeover

You may be surprised at how many unhealthful foods you have stored in your pantry that are easily replaced with delicious and healthful alternatives. It is time to makeover the pantry and start nourishing yourself and your families with good-for-you food.

### **Clean it out!**

Get rid of:

- Old and rancid oils
- Hydrogenated oils- the source of Trans Fat
- Sugar-loaded processed foods
- Salt-loaded processed foods
- Refined carbohydrates

### **Good Fats to Stock the Pantry**

By far one of the most important items in your pantry, in terms of how they effect your health, are the fats you cook with and use in salads. The first place to start in a panty make-over would be to look at and smell your oils. Why smell your oils you ask? Oils may become oxidized, or rancid, if they are old or have been exposed to heat or light. We do not want to consume these oils because they contain free radicals that damage our cells. Rancid oils have an off, un-natural smell, which is hard to mistake once you know what it smells like. Oils become rancid fairly quickly at room temperature and with exposure to light.

Some tips to prevent your oil from becoming rancid too quickly:

- keep oil in a cool and dark place, not next to the stove
- buy in small quantities that you will be able to use in a few months

### **Olive Oil**

Olive oil has withstood the test of time and is the safest vegetable oil you can use. Olive oil is high in monounsaturated fats, which help keep arteries free and clear of cholesterol buildup. Olive oil is also abundant in antioxidants, including vitamin E and polyphenols, the same substances found in tea and wine. By blocking the damaging effects of free radicals, these antioxidants protect the lining of the blood vessels and may even slow the aging process.

Buying and storing Olive Oil: Choose extra-virgin olive oil, which indicates that the oil was pressed and bottled without the need of chemicals. The least refined

oil contains the most antioxidants. Store at room temperature, but away from heat and light (including sunlight). Olive oil is best used within a few months of purchase.

### **Canola Oil**

Canola oil is made from rapeseed, a member of the mustard family. It is higher in Omega 3's than other cooking oils. Canola oil is stable, has a long shelf life and is versatile cooking oil. Because it's virtually flavorless, canola oil is a great choice when you want the flavor of other ingredients to come through. Buy cold-pressed, unrefined canola oil. Canola oil can be stored at room temperature, but keep it away from light.

### **Coconut Oil**

Coconut oil, although a saturated fat, is comprised of short and medium chain fatty acids and is therefore metabolized differently than the long-chain fatty acids from saturated fat in meat. Medium chain triglycerides (MCT's) are not associated with increases in cholesterol. MCT's are more easily converted to energy (by the liver) than stored as fat. Coconut oil is good for high heat cooking such as sautéing and stir frying because it has a high smoke point.

### **Bad Fats to Eliminate From the Pantry**

**Trans fatty acids:** Trans fats are also known as hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils. They are made by adding hydrogen to liquid oil. This process increases the shelf life of the oils. Unfortunately, the process of hydrogenation ruins the fat and makes it unfit for consumption. You will find trans fats in a wide range of commonly eaten foods, anything with hydrogenated oil such as shortening, margarine, many baked products, processed foods, baking mixes, peanut butter, breads, microwave popcorn, etc. Trans fats increase cholesterol and all blood lipids (triglycerides), inhibit essential fatty acid metabolism, modify cell membrane properties (cell walls become stiff and unable to process nutrients and wastes). Some researchers believe that trans fats change how cells process insulin--which can lead to diabetes. Trans fats have been linked to cancer.

**Trans fats lurking in your pantry:** Many of the products in your pantry contain hydrogenated fats, or trans fats. Check the ingredient lists of the following items for hydrogenated oils.

- Shortening
- Peanut butter
- Crackers
- Baked goods
- Microwave popcorn
- Baking and Pancake mixes

There are many trans fat free alternatives to these common pantry items. Look for the following healthful options:

- Earth Balance or Spectrum trans fat free shortening
- Adams Natural Peanut butter, Maranatha Peanut butter, Woodstock Farms Peanut butter
- Whole grain crackers such as RyVita, Wasa, Kavli, Finn Crisp, and Ak-mak
- Microwave popcorn from Bearitos, Garden of Eatin', and Newman's Own
- Baking and Pancake mixes from Arrowhead Mills and Bob's Red Mill

### **Watch out for Sugar**

The average American consumes about 150 pounds of sugar each year. This accounts for 550 to 650 calories a day, or almost three pounds per week. The empty calories in sugar contribute directly to suppressed immune response, dental cavities, diabetes, obesity, overall poor health and dangerous fluctuations in blood sugar and undesirable changes in mood and behavior.

When assessing the sugar in your diet, reading food labels is a must. Sugar may be listed as: barley malt, beet sugar, brown sugar, buttered syrup, cane juice crystals, cane sugar, caramel, carob syrup, corn syrup solids, date sugar, dextrin, dextrose, diastase, diastatic malt, ethyl maltol, fructose, fruit juice and fruit juice concentrate, glucose, glucose solids, golden sugar, golden syrup, grape sugar, high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltodextrin, maltose, mannitol, molasses, raw sugar, refiner's syrup, sorbitol, sorghum syrup, sucrose, sugar, turbinado sugar, xylitol, and yellow sugar. All of these ingredients may be used to sweeten foods.

It is best to cut down on sweet foods but if you must, the better sweeteners are agave nectar, pure maple syrup, honey, stevia, fruit juice, xylitol, barley malt, and brown rice syrup.

### **How low is the Sodium?**

Many foods naturally contain sodium. Dairy products, such as fat free milk contain about 130 mg of naturally occurring sodium per cup. No salt added canned tomatoes contain about 35 mg of sodium per half cup. Celery is another food that contains naturally occurring sodium. (Paradoxically, daily consumption of celery has been shown to help lower blood pressure.)

The foods highest in added sodium are:

- Cured and smoked meats- bacon, ham, salami
- Canned meats- devilled ham, Spam, Vienna sausages
- Processed meats- hot dogs, lunch meats, bologna
- Condiments- ketchup, soy sauce, mustard
- Packaged snack foods- chips, pretzels, crackers
- Canned vegetables
- Some dairy products- some cheeses and buttermilk

- Pickles
- Prepared mixes
- Canned soups
- Frozen entrees
- Boxed or prepared entrees

## **Grains**

### **Brown Foods vs. White Foods**

Whole grains offer *a whole lot more* nutritionally than do refined white flours. Whole grains are a source of carbohydrate, but in their whole form will also provide fiber, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids. These healthful components have been removed from processed grains. Switching from white flour bread, crackers and pasta to whole grains will improve health and also help in your attempts to balance blood sugar. When reading labels, look for the word "whole" at the beginning of your list of ingredients. You don't want to buy bread that looks healthy, but is actually mostly white flour, with some molasses and whole wheat flour thrown in to make it look like a hearty brown bread. When shopping for crackers and bread, reading labels is a must. Look for products made with 100% whole grains, which means the word "whole" will be at the top of the ingredient list.

For quick and healthy starch whole grains can be cooked in chicken or vegetable broth and seasoned with fresh herbs and or spices, garlic, onions and lightly tossed with the best quality extra virgin olive oil.

### **Shopping List for Stocking the Pantry**

Now that you have tossed the bad stuff, stock your pantry with these delicious and healthful alternatives. Many cookbooks now have a pantry list included to make shopping for specific recipes easier. Check out *The Essential Eating Well Cookbook* or *The Mom's Guide to Meal Makeovers* for great recipes and pantry lists. Here is an example of a well-stocked pantry.

#### **Oils**

Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
 Canola Oil  
 Coconut Oil  
 Walnut Oil  
 Grape Seed Oil  
 Trans Fat Free Shortening (for baking) from Earth Balance or Spectrum

#### **Baking Supplies**

Whole Wheat Pastry Flour  
 Real Maple Syrup  
 Honey

Agave Nectar  
 Brown Rice Syrup  
 Xylitol (birch sugar)  
 Dark Chocolate Chips  
 Whole, raw nuts

#### **Grains**

Whole wheat pasta  
 Whole wheat couscous  
 Brown basmati rice  
 Wild rice  
 Quinoa  
 Pearled barley  
 Polenta

Oats

**Beans**

Dried Beans

Dried Lentils

Dried Split Peas

Canned beans such as black, kidney, garbanzo and cannellini beans

**Condiments**

Balsamic vinegar

Sherry vinegar

Apple cider vinegar

Capers

Olive Tapenade

Hoisin sauce

**Miscellaneous Items**

Canned tomatoes, no salt added

Chicken stock

Vegetable stock

Mushroom stock

Beef stock

White wine for cooking

Natural Nut butters such as peanut, cashew, almond and hazelnut

Anchovies

Sardines

Tuna

Sun dried tomatoes

Roasted red peppers

Artichoke hearts

Olives

Curry paste

**Organic Frozen Produce**

Spinach

Peas

Corn

Broccoli

Edamame

Butternut Squash

Tri-colored Peppers

Strawberries

Wild blueberries

Raspberries

**Long-lasting Fresh Produce**

Onions

Shallots

Garlic

Ginger (keep frozen for up to 3 months)

Citrus juice (freeze in ice cube trays, then store in a zip top bag)

Fresh, homemade pesto (freeze in ice cube trays, then store in a zip top bag)

**Herbs and Spices**

Using fresh herbs in all your meals is a wonderful way to get many powerful phytochemicals, antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antibacterial and antifungal elements in your diet. Science is just beginning to uncover some of the health benefits of herbs and spices used in traditional culinary practices of Indian and Asian and Hispanic cultures. Fresh herbs and spices also give a meal an incredible freshness, a sense of opulence and makes the cook look like a gourmet chef.

**Ethnic Flavor Profiles for Herb and Spices**

**Chinese Cuisine**

Aniseed, Bean Paste, Chile Oil, Garlic, Gingerroot, Green Onions, Hot Red

Peppers, Sesame Oil, Sesame Seeds, Soy Sauce, Star Anise, Chinese Five Spice

#### **Southeast Asia**

Garlic, Gingerroot, Galangal, Chilies, Cilantro, Lemongrass, Basil, Lime, Fish Sauce, Sugar, Coconut

#### **Mexican Cuisine**

Bell Peppers, Chiles, Cilantro, Cinnamon, Cocoa, Coriander Seeds, Cumin Seeds, Garlic, Lime, Onions, Oregano, Vanilla

#### **German Cuisine**

Allspice, Caraway Seeds, Cinnamon, Dill Seeds, Dillweed, Dry Mustard Powder, Ginger, Juniper Berries, Mustard Seeds, Nutmeg, Onions, Paprika, White Pepper

#### **Spanish Cuisine**

Almonds, Bell Peppers, Cumin Seeds, Garlic, Olives, Onions, Paprika, Parsley, Saffron

#### **Italian Cuisine**

Anchovies, Basil, Bay Leaves, Fennel Seeds, Garlic, Marjoram, Onions, Oregano, Parsley, Pine Nuts, Red Pepper, Rosemary

#### **Indian Cuisine**

Aniseed, Black Pepper, Cardamom Seeds, Chiles, Cilantro, Cinnamon, Cloves, Coriander Seeds, Cumin Seeds, Curry Powder, Fenugreek (an aromatic Eurasian plant used in curry powder and other spice blends), Garam Masala, Garlic, Gingerroot, Mace, Mint, Mustard Seeds, Nutmeg, Red Pepper, Saffron, Sesame Seeds, Turmeric, Yogurt

#### **French Cuisine**

Bay Leaves, Black Pepper, Chervil, Chives, Garlic, Green and Pink Peppercorns, Marjoram, Nutmeg, Onions, Parsley, Rosemary, Shallots, Tarragon, Thyme

#### **Greek Cuisine**

Cinnamon, Dill, Garlic, Lemon, Mint, Nutmeg, Olives, Oregano

#### **Caribbean Cuisine**

Allspice, Cinnamon, Cloves, Coriander, Curry, Garlic, Gingerroot, Lime, Nutmeg, Onions, Oregano, Red Pepper, Scotch bonnet peppers and hot sauce, Thyme

#### **Scandinavian Cuisine**

Cardamom Seeds, Dill Seeds, Dill Weed, Lemon, Mustard Seeds, Nutmeg, White Pepper

#### **North African Cuisine**

Cilantro, Cinnamon, Coriander Seeds, Cumin Seeds, Garlic, Gingerroot, Mint, Red Pepper, Saffron, Turmeric

Reference for Flavor Profiles: <http://www.cookinglight.com>