

Extension

March 2014 Newsletter

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Pasta-abilities

Glenda Wentworth, Family & Consumer Science Extension Agent, Eagle County

Children love pasta. Pasta is an ideal food as part of a healthy diet for children. If you're trying to make small changes to your diet buying whole wheat pasta is a good place to start. Pasta, including noodles, is low in sodium and fat. Choose whole grain pasta to get added nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals and fiber.



It is recommended to eat six, 1 ounce servings of grains (cereals, pasta, rice, bread, etc.) per day. A one-half cup of cooked pasta counts as a serving from the grains group. Further recommendations suggest consuming at least half of all grains as whole grains. Increase whole-grain intake by replacing refined pasta with whole grain pasta.

Whole wheat pasta can provide up to 12.5% of daily fiber requirements in every one half cup portion. Dietary fiber from whole grains may help reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.

Sauces are flavorful liquids used to enhance the taste of pasta. Be careful when choosing a sauce to add to your pasta. Some sauces are high in fat and should be used in moderation. Cream based and cheese sauces are usually high in saturated fat and calories. For a healthier option, use low-fat or nonfat milk, low-fat or nonfat cheese, or a tomato based sauce. This helps to decrease saturated fat and calories in the sauce.

General pasta cooking tips:

- Use only small amounts of vegetable oils, margarine and vegetable cooking spray when preparing pasta dishes, if any at all.
- Keep leftover cooked pasta in the refrigerator for up to three days. When it's time to reheat, simply put it in a colander and then place it directly into boiling water for one minute.
- Add leftover pasta to a favorite soup recipe. If you use dry pasta, simmer the soup for an additional 5 to 10 minutes or until the pasta is cooked.
- Make mealtime more enjoyable by serving different, fun shapes – stars, letters, wheels or spaghetti.
- Save time with pasta leftovers – double your favorite recipes. Then freeze the extra servings for later use. This works especially well with sauces and baked pasta dishes like lasagna.

Let's Talk

Looking to add more veggies into your diet?

Discuss with children that being healthy includes having meatless dishes occasionally. So instead of meat, try adding vegetables to a light tomato sauce for a healthy option. This provides the pasta dish with plenty of flavor and crunch. Other ideas include:

- Dice one-half of an eggplant and one cup of mushrooms and sauté in a skillet until cooked. Stir in your favorite marina sauce and serve over whole-grain pasta.
- Your children will love using a potato peeler to make zucchini ribbons. Sauté the zucchini ribbons in a little olive oil then toss with cooked pasta.
- Near the end of the pasta cooking time, add your child's favorite vegetable to the boiling water, drain and combine it with the sauce.

Recipe for Health: Vegetarian Spaghetti Sauce

http://louisville.edu/medschool/familymedicine/family-medicine/nutrition-handouts/new_dash%201011.pdf/at_download/file

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 1/4 cup zucchini, sliced
- 1 Tbsp oregano, dried
- 1 Tbsp basil, dried
- 1 - 8 oz. can tomato sauce, no-salt added
- 1 - 6 oz. can tomato paste
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup water



Instructions

1. In a medium skillet, heat oil. Sauté onions, garlic, and zucchini in oil for 5 minutes on medium heat.
2. Add remaining ingredients and simmer covered for 45 minutes. Serve over whole wheat spaghetti.

Tangy Crisp Vegetable and Pasta Salad

<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/recipes/tangy-crisp-vegetable-and-pasta-salad>

- 1/2 cup whole wheat pasta, uncooked (such as shells, macaroni, etc)
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cucumber (medium, peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped)
- 1/2 carrot (medium, thinly sliced)
- 1/2 tomato (medium, coarsely chopped)
- 1/4 green pepper (coarsely chopped)
- 1/2 cup broccoli florets (coarsely chopped)
- 1/2 cup radishes (thinly sliced)
- 2 tablespoons onion, green or red (coarsely chopped)



Instructions

1. Wash your hands and work area.
2. Cook whole wheat pasta according to package directions but do not add salt to cooking water. Drain, rinse with cool water, and drain again.
3. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine vinegar, sugar, salt, garlic powder and black pepper. Stir and heat over medium heat until sugar is dissolved, but do not boil. Let cool.
4. Rinse, drain, and chop remaining ingredients. Combine in a shallow container, such as an 8x8 inch pan.
5. Add cooked pasta, and vinegar mixture. Mix gently.
6. Cover and refrigerate overnight to allow flavors to blend.
7. Serve cold using a slotted spoon.
8. Cover and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

For more information and recipes for cooking with pasta, visit the National Pasta Association website.

Helping families increase physical activity and enjoy healthy foods...