

Daily Union Article

Saturday, January 14, 2017

Title: "Soup's On!"

As I write this, the weather forecast for the weekend is looming over our area like a dark cloud of concern. Everything about the impending winter storm screams "Soup's On!"

Soup is a quick and easy comfort food that can warm you up and satisfy your appetite. It is economical and good for your health, as well!

A hearty soup can be an excellent source of vegetables for those who are striving to meet the recommended daily intake of 2 – 3 cups each day for adults. Age, gender, and level of physical activity determine a person's specific daily needs. Check out www.myplate.gov to find the amount of vegetables you and your family members need each day.

It's easy to increase the amount of vegetables in any soup – including already prepared varieties purchased at the grocery store. Add fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and adjust the cooking time to allow the additional vegetables to cook in with the pre-made soup. Even leftover peas from another meal work well in soups. This is also a great way to introduce a new vegetable into your family's diet without purchasing large quantities – a small head of endive, or one rutabaga at a time, for example.

Vegetable laden soups contain many vitamins, such as vitamin A and C. Cream soups supply calcium and vitamin D. Ingredients such as legumes (dry beans) are an economical way to include protein in your diet and are an excellent source of fiber, folate, and potassium.

Keep in mind that many purchased soups have high levels of sodium. Lower the sodium by making your soup from scratch, including the broth. You can make a tasty pot of vegetable stock using accumulated scraps of fresh vegetable trimmings. Build up a supply of these by placing onion peels, carrot tops, celery leaves and hearts of celery stalks in a sealed container in your freezer. By using a wide variety of vegetables and herbs, you can enhance the flavor and add color to your vegetable stock. Don't overdo it with cruciferous produce such as broccoli, cauliflower, or Brussels sprouts because too much of these types of vegetables can turn your stock bitter and give it a strong sulfur aroma.

When using purchased soups, read the nutritional facts labels carefully. Select low-sodium versions, if possible. Ingredients such as processed meats, premade broth and cheese are all known for contributing high levels of sodium. Wait to season the soup

with salt near the end of the cooking process, or – better yet – using moderation add it to individual bowls at the table.

Soups with fish or chicken provide a source of lean protein and the recipes are typically low in fat. These ingredients can also stretch the food budget for the family.

Cream-based soups often include high-fat dairy ingredients that increase the calories from fat which offsets some of the health benefits of consuming soup. You can remedy this by adding a thickening agent such as flour or cornstarch and replacing the high-fat dairy ingredients with low-fat versions. This reduces the calories without sacrificing the creamy texture of the soup. When using a broth based soup, you can reduce calories by chilling the broth long enough for the fat to rise to the top and solidify. You then remove the fat by spooning it off the top.

Here's a tasty cream-soup that is high on flavor without too much sodium and fat:

Ten Minute Corn Chowder

Serving Size: 1-1/4 cup

Yield: 4 servings

- 1 teaspoon oil
 - 1/2 chopped onion
 - 1 teaspoon minced garlic
 - 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 - 3 cups nonfat milk
 - 2 teaspoons mustard
 - 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
 - black pepper to taste
 - 2 cups frozen corn kernels
 - 4 tablespoons shredded, reduced-fat cheddar cheese
1. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add the oil and saute the onion and garlic until golden, about 2 minutes.
 2. Meanwhile, place the flour, milk, mustard and seasonings in a small bowl and mix well.
 3. Add the milk mixture to the skillet followed by the corn; mix well until the mixture comes to a boil and thickens, about 3 minutes. Stir frequently to keep the mixture from burning.
 4. Divide into four bowls and top each with 1 tablespoon of shredded cheese.

Source: Adapted from: *Cooking Demo II*, p.56, Food and Health Communications, Inc.; available at [SNAP-Ed Nutrition Program Recipe Finder](#).

Nutrition Information: Calories, 350; Total Fat, 13g; Saturated Fat, 3g; Trans Fat 3g; Cholesterol, 10mg; Sodium, 620mg; Total Carbohydrate, 45g; Dietary Fiber, 5g; Sugars, 11g; Protein, 9g.

Preparation Notes:

1. If you don't have frozen corn, use canned corn.
2. If you'd like to substitute fresh thyme for the dried thyme, use about 1 teaspoon of fresh thyme.
3. You can use other types of cheeses in the recipe, just be aware the calorie and fat level will be raised with a higher fat cheese.
4. The mustard adds an extra boost of flavor to this recipe; however, if you're not a big mustard fan or have one of the hotter or spicier mustards, you might start with 1 teaspoon.
5. If you have trouble keeping sauces and gravies from turning lumpy, try using a quick-mixing flour such as *Wondra Quick-Mixing Flour*.*

For this recipe and more, check out the Seven Simple Soups and Stews under "related links" on the Geary County K-State Research and Extension webpage:

<http://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/index.html>

On these cold wintery days, stay warm and stay healthy with soups and stews packed with nutrients. For more information about healthy meal options, contact me at the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office at 785-238-4161. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!