

# Cooking Tips for Healthy Eating in the South Asian Community



Making lifestyle changes such as eating healthily, increasing activity levels and stopping smoking, can help reduce your risk of developing a number of serious health conditions such as **obesity**, **heart disease** and **diabetes**.

The following cooking tips will help to make traditional dishes healthier.

<b>COMMONLY EATEN FOODS</b>	<b>HEALTHY COOKING TIPS</b>
<b>When making chapattis try to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Use less oil in the dough. A useful tip to try is to make chapattis with boiling water and some milk instead of oil, and serve just before you are ready to eat.</li> <li>❖ Use a mono or polyunsaturated spread instead of butter, ghee or other vegetable margarines. You can choose light versions, as these are low in fat but remember to use them sparingly. Or better still you can avoid spreading any type of fat such as butter/ghee on them.</li> <li>❖ Use different grades of flour such as grade 3 as this will increase the fibre content of your diet. Fibre is needed in the diet to maintain bowel health.</li> </ul>
<b>When making thepla try to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Make thicker theplas, as less fat will be used to cook the same quantity.</li> <li>❖ Cook in a non-stick chapatti pan, over a medium heat. Make sure both sides are cooked. It can be done without oil!</li> <li>❖ Serve with plain low fat yogurt.</li> </ul>
<b>When making papad try to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Cook them in the microwave for about 1 - 2 minutes or alternatively grill them.</li> <li>❖ Instead of serving them with a pickle why not try to serve them with an onion and tomato mixture.</li> <li>❖ To make the mixture - cut small pieces of onion and tomato and mix together with lemon juice, coriander and a touch of red chilli powder.</li> </ul>
<b>When making curries try to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Use a vegetable based oil e.g. olive, rapeseed or sunflower oil rather than ghee or butter when cooking.</li> <li>❖ Use less oil in cooking. Even if you use olive, sunflower, corn or vegetable oil they are all high in fat. A useful tip is to measure the amount of fat you add for vughar with a tablespoon, rather than pouring the oil straight from the container and gradually reduce the amount you use. Try using a maximum of 1 tablespoon of oil for a family of four.</li> <li>❖ Use a non-stick pan to reduce the amount of oil needed.</li> <li>❖ To prevent food from sticking, use a lower heat. This will enable you to use less oil when you start cooking.</li> <li>❖ Fry spices and pour off extra oil and then continue cooking</li> <li>❖ Drain off oil floating on the surface of any curry.</li> <li>❖ Add extra vegetables or pulses (peas, beans, lentils or dhals) or serve the curry with salad.</li> </ul>

<b>Meat and Oily Fish</b>	<p><b>Meat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Buy lean cuts of meat and remove all visible fat before cooking.</li> <li>❖ Remove the skin from chicken and turkey before cooking.</li> <li>❖ Try tandoori-style, dry roasting, grilling or baking meats instead of making curries.</li> </ul> <p><b>Oily fish</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Try to have oily fish e.g. salmon, sardines, mackerel, trout and herring at least once a week.</li> </ul>
<b>Potato</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Slice the potatoes into thick 'wedges'.</li> <li>❖ Cook the potatoes with their skins on, as the skin on a potato contains fibre.</li> </ul>
<b>Paneer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Paneer is high in fat so do not have it too often. It can be made with semi-skimmed milk which will reduce the fat content.</li> <li>❖ Replace recipes that call for paneer with firm tofu. No one will notice the difference!</li> </ul>
<b>When making dhal:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Follow the cooking methods already described to make a curry.</li> <li>❖ Choose peas, beans, lentils and dhals more often as these are low in fat and high in fibre. They are also a good source of protein.</li> </ul>
<b>When cooking rice:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Try to avoid adding butter/margarine to rice.</li> <li>❖ Choose boiled rice more often than fried rice.</li> <li>❖ Try brown rice occasionally.</li> <li>❖ Add boiled vegetables such as carrots, sweetcorn and peas to the rice.</li> </ul>
<b>When making raita try to use:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Low fat plain yogurt or</li> <li>❖ If you make homemade yogurt try using semi skimmed milk or skimmed milk. Many people think that low-fat milks will not curdle properly, however this is not true! The lower fat milk curdles just as well. To help, add skimmed milk powder to the milk after boiling, this will help the milk curdle (use approximately 1 tablespoon skimmed milk powder to make a large bowl of yogurt).</li> <li>❖ To increase your fruit and vegetable intake try to add extra grated/chopped vegetables and fruits to raitas.</li> </ul>
<b>When making mixed bhajias:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Make a thick paste with the gram flour and all the other ingredients (potatoes, onion, cabbage, lemon juice, chopped coriander, yoghurt, crushed chillies turmeric, black pepper, cumin seeds, and carom seeds) add a little water if required.</li> <li>❖ Spoon the mixture into a non-stick frying pan and cook until brown, turning as necessary.</li> </ul>

<b>When making samosa / kachori:</b>	<p>Try to limit your intake of these foods as they are high in fat and can cause weight gain!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Avoid deep-frying samosas. Try baking or grilling them instead, turning once to ensure both sides are lightly browned.</li> <li>❖ Try adding extra vegetables to fillings.</li> </ul>
<b>When making kheer try to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Use semi skimmed milk.</li> <li>❖ Use a maximum of 1 tablespoon sugar/artificial sweetener (for 4 servings).</li> <li>❖ Cook in a non-stick pan on a low heat to prevent sticking.</li> </ul>
<b>When making carrot halva try to:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Use semi skimmed milk.</li> <li>❖ Use a maximum of 1 tablespoon low fat margarine (for six servings).</li> <li>❖ Cook in a non-stick pan on a low heat to prevent sticking.</li> </ul>
<b>Drinks</b>	<p><b>It is important to drink at least 8 glasses of fluid per day!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ You could try to drink more water, unsweetened diluted fruit juice or lassi.</li> <li>❖ Lassi can be made in several different ways. In Punjab, people drink sweet lassi and fruit-flavoured lassi. In Gujarat and the South, it's savoury, with salt, cumin and mint.</li> <li>❖ When making your own lassi try to use semi skimmed or skimmed milk and use less salt or sugar.</li> </ul>
<b>Salt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reduce the amount of salt you use when cooking i.e. curry, rice, salad, and lassi</li> <li>❖ Avoid adding salt at the table</li> <li>❖ Use different flavours as an alternative to salt, e.g. black pepper, mixed spices, lemon juice, garlic, chilli</li> <li>❖ Cut down on foods such as cheese, crisps, sev, chevda, salted nuts, as these are high in salt.</li> </ul>

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