

Many of your favourite recipes can be made healthier by swapping some ingredients or using a different cooking method.

Try some of these simple changes to increase the **GREEN** and **AMBER** foods and drinks you provide!

Healthier ingredients

Recipes can be generally made healthier by either reducing or deleting the less healthy ingredients or by using a healthier alternative. Make your recipes healthier with these simple ingredient swaps:

Ingredient	Healthier alternative
Butter and lard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace with margarine (preferably reduced fat). • Replace with canola or olive oil. 
Oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a spray variety, or brush on liquid oil. • Halve the quantity.
Cream and sour cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace with evaporated milk (preferably reduced fat). • Replace with natural or Greek yoghurt (preferably reduced fat).
Coconut cream/milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace with coconut flavoured evaporated milk (preferably reduced fat) or yoghurt. • Use a reduced fat coconut milk. 
Sauces, salad dressings and mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reduced fat and/or reduced salt varieties. • Use balsamic or other vinegar-based dressings, lemon juice, herbs and mustards. • Use low fat tzatziki instead of mayonnaise.
Cheese, milk and yoghurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reduced fat varieties. • Use cheese with strong flavours and less of it. • Use naturally lower fat cheeses, such as ricotta or cottage cheese. 
Fatty processed meats (e.g. salami, chorizo, kabana)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace with lean ham, skinless chicken or turkey breast. 

Ingredient	Healthier alternative
Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choose lean cuts and lean varieties. ● Remove visible (white) fat before cooking. ● Remove skin from chicken and turkey before cooking. ● Replace some meat with legumes (beans, lentils, peas).
Fish canned in oil, flavour combinations or brine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use fish canned in spring water. 
Canned fruit and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choose reduced salt and/or reduced sugar varieties. ● Select fruit in natural juice, rather than syrup.
Stock and gravy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use reduced salt varieties.
White flour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Substitute all or half the white flour with wholemeal flour. ● Add wheat germ or whole grains to white flour in recipes.
Salt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use fresh or dried herbs, garlic, lemon, juice, vinegar and mustards to flavour foods. ● Avoid adding salt when cooking. ● Wherever possible choose reduced salt varieties of foods. 
Sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Replace all or some of the sugar with fruit puree, fresh or dried fruit. 

Avoid pan-frying or deep-frying items as this increases the fat content of foods.

Healthier cooking methods

Healthier cooking methods include:

- stir-fry
- steam or blanch in water
- boil, braise and simmer
- grill and toast
- microwave, and
- roast or bake with minimal oil (e.g. using oil spray or brushing on oil).



Some additional tips

- Use non-stick cookware or an oil spray (like canola or olive oil) instead of a liquid oil to reduce the amount of fat added during cooking.
- When baking, use baking paper instead of oil to ensure items do not stick to the tray.
- Bake crumbed and coated foods instead of frying.



Example Healthy recipe makeover

The example below shows how a traditional beef casserole has been modified using the above suggestions to become a healthier meal. These changes have upgraded the meal's classification from the **AMBER** to **GREEN** category.

Beef casserole Serves 15

Original ingredients	Healthier alternative	Modification	Health benefit
2kg regular beef	1.5kg lean beef (fat trimmed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular beef swapped for lean beef. Visible fat trimmed off meat. Beef quantity reduced. 	Saturated fat content reduced
4 rashers bacon	150g lean ham (chopped)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed bacon completely. Replaced bacon with chopped ham. 	Saturated fat content reduced
2 cups regular stock	2 cups reduced salt stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular stock swapped with a reduced salt stock. 	Salt content reduced
120g butter	2 tablespoons canola oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter replaced with canola oil. Amount of oil used reduced. 	Total fat content reduced
4 onions	4 onions, 4 carrots, 400g chickpeas, 1 cup frozen peas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra vegetables added. 	Increased nutrients and fibre
850g crushed tomatoes	850g reduced salt crushed tomato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular tomatoes swapped for a reduced salt variety. 	Salt content reduced
4 garlic cloves	4 garlic cloves		
Salt and pepper	Pepper, 1 tablespoon dried mixed herbs and rosemary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salt swapped for extra herbs. 	Salt content reduced
AMBER	GREEN	Healthier meal and an improved Traffic Light category!	



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