

Take Comfort in Healthy Comfort Foods

By using these heart-healthy alternatives, you can find comfort in your favorite foods without hurting your health.

When the temperature drops, do you suddenly crave meat loaf and mashed potatoes? How about Grandma's cookies? We all have foods that make us feel good, but these old family favorites tend to be loaded with fat and calories. Take heart; you can find comfort in your favorite foods without hurting your health.

- **Prepare food yourself** rather than relying on prepackaged food or takeout.
- **Add extra vegetables or beans** to soups, stews and casseroles. In addition to the extra nutrients, this provides bulk and fiber, which will help keep you more satisfied on fewer calories.
- **Try broth-based rather than cream soups.** If you do make cream soup, substitute low-fat milk for cream, or use half milk and half water.
- **Choose lean meats and skinless poultry;** bake, don't fry. Try ground turkey or chicken instead of beef in chili or meat loaf.
- **Snack on fiber-rich foods** like carrot sticks, sweet red or green peppers, a crunchy apple or berries, or air-popped popcorn (drizzled with a teaspoon of olive oil) instead of chips or cookies.
- **Substitute whole grains** such as brown rice, barley and whole wheat pasta for their white counterparts. Simply swapping one for the other will boost your nutrition and fiber without changing the recipe.
- **Enjoy a hot cup of chai, green or black tea** with a teaspoon of honey instead of hot chocolate or specialty coffees, which are often high in sugar and calories.
- **Limit portion sizes.** Want to indulge in something you love? Keep portions small and savor every bite.

