

FAMILY-FRIENDLY, DIABETES-FRIENDLY RECIPES

Here are four healthy recipes, by registered dietitian and founder of Info Nutrition, Marta Grzegorzczuk, that should help keep your blood sugar levels stable. If taking insulin, calculate your carb allowance beforehand.

1. BROCCOLI AND CHICKEN PITAS

Antioxidant rich, cancer preventing, cholesterol lowering.... The list of healthy benefits from broccoli is long, making it a valuable ally for your health. In this recipe, the broccoli is cut into small pieces, so you get all the vegetable's benefits without it overwhelming your taste buds.

A HEALTHY LUNCH

Ingredients:

1½ cup (375 ml) shredded cooked chicken breast
1 cup (250 ml) broccoli florets, cut into small pieces
½ cup (125 ml) grated carrot
¾ cup (175 ml) low-fat Greek yogurt (2% M.F. or less)
1 tbsp (15 ml) light mayonnaise
1 clove garlic
½ tsp (2 ml) salt
½ tsp (2 ml) pepper
½ tsp (2 ml) dry oregano
2 whole wheat pitas (about 10-inch diameter)

Instructions:

-Mix chicken, broccoli and carrots in a bowl.
-In a separate bowl, mix yogurt, mayonnaise and seasoning. Add to chicken mixture and mix to coat.
-Cut each pita in half. Scoop a quarter of the chicken mixture into each half. -Serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrients per serving: 389 calories, 8 g fat (2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 50 mg cholesterol, 436 mg sodium, 23 g carbohydrates (4 g fibre, 1 g sugar), 25 g protein.

2. STUFFED EGGPLANT

This complete meal contains protein from ground beef and fibre from whole-wheat couscous. It will fill you up, nourish your body and, most importantly, keep your blood sugar under control.

Ingredients:

1 tsp (5 ml) olive oil
1 cooking onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 lb (500 g) extra-lean ground beef
1 cup (250 ml) whole-wheat couscous
2 medium eggplants
1 796-ml can diced tomatoes

½ cup (125 ml) red wine (or low-sodium vegetable broth)
1 tsp (5 ml) dry Italian spices (or a blend of oregano, rosemary and basil)
½ tsp (2 ml) salt
½ tsp (2 ml) pepper
½ cup (125 ml) low-fat grated mozzarella

Instructions:

-Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
-Over medium heat, add oil to sauté pan. Add onion and crushed garlic. Sauté for 1 to 2 minutes, until onion becomes translucent. Add ground beef and cook for 10 to 15 minutes, until meat is cooked thoroughly (no longer pink).
-Cook couscous according to package instructions. Set aside.
-Cut eggplants in half, lengthwise. Core, leaving about half an inch of eggplant on the skin. Dice the eggplant that was removed from the skin. Add eggplant to ground beef, stirring mix occasionally, cooking for about 5 min. Add canned tomatoes, wine (or vegetable broth) and seasoning, and cook for another 2 minutes.
-Add couscous to the beef and eggplant mixture. Combine well. Scoop mixture into the eggplant skins.
-Place the stuffed eggplants on a baking sheet and pour ½ cup (125 ml) of water over each, and cover with aluminum foil. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil, add mozzarella cheese on top, and broil until cheese is melted and golden brown. Serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrients per serving: 423 calories, 10 g fat (4 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 79 mg cholesterol, 43 mg sodium, 43 g carbohydrates (13 g fibre, 15 g sugar), 37 g protein

3. NUT AND APRICOT BARS

Nuts are rich in healthy fats that are good for your heart's health. Dried apricots will provide the necessary sweetness to these bars, but since they have a low glycemic index, this will result in a slower increase in blood sugar. (See a nut-free version of this recipe below.)

Ingredients:

Olive oil spray
1½ tbsp (22 ml) melted butter
2 tbsp (25 ml) honey
2 tbsp (25 ml) unsweetened applesauce
1½ cup (375 ml) rolled oats
2 eggs
½ tsp (2 ml) vanilla extract
½ cup (125 ml) almonds
½ cup (125 ml) pistachios
¼ cup (50 ml) sunflower seeds
6 dried apricots, sliced
2 tbsp (25 ml) honey
½ tsp (2 ml) ground cinnamon

Instructions:

-Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray an 8-by-8-inch baking pan with oil and line with parchment paper.

- Mix melted butter and honey together in a glass bowl, and heat in microwave for 20 seconds on high, or until the mixture becomes liquified. Add applesauce and oats. Mix until well combined.
- With your hands or a silicon spatula, scoop out mixture, and firmly and evenly press into the baking pan. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown.
- While the crust is baking, lightly beat two eggs in a large bowl and add remaining ingredients. Stir well, until all nuts and fruits are evenly coated. Pour mixture over baked crust, making sure to distribute evenly. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Let cool completely before cutting into 16 squares. Serve.

Makes 16 servings.

Nutrients per serving: 115 calories, 6 g fat (1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 28 mg cholesterol, 10 mg sodium, 13 g carbohydrates (2 g fibre, 7 g sugar), 4 g protein

4. NUT-FREE COCONUT AND APRICOT BARS

For those allergic to nuts and seeds, you can replace them with shredded coconut. Coconut contains types of fats that have been found to lower bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol. So not only is it tasty; it's good for you, too!

Ingredients:

Olive oil spray
1½ tbsp (22 ml) melted butter
2 tbsp (25 ml) honey
2 tbsp (25 ml) unsweetened applesauce
1½ cup (375 ml) rolled oats
2 eggs
½ tsp (2 ml) vanilla extract
1 cup (250 ml) shredded unsweetened coconut
6 dried apricots, sliced
2 tbsp (25 ml) honey
½ tsp (2 ml) ground cinnamon

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray an 8-by-8-inch baking pan with oil and line with parchment paper.
- Mix melted butter and honey together in a glass bowl, and heat in microwave for 20 seconds on high, or until the mixture becomes liquified. Add applesauce and oats. Mix until well combined.
- With your hands or a silicon spatula, scoop out mixture, and firmly and evenly press into the baking pan. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown.
- While the crust is baking, lightly beat the two eggs and add the rest of the ingredients. Stir well, until all fruit is evenly coated. Pour mixture over baked crust, making sure to distribute evenly.
- Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Let cool completely before cutting into 16 squares. Serve.

Makes 16 servings.

Nutrients per serving: 158 calories, 9 g fat (8 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 28 mg cholesterol, 10 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrates (3 g fibre, 7 g sugar), 3 g protein