

Great Meals

For Men's Health Month

Great men throughout history have contributed to a better society. They have fought for our safety and stood for justice. And many have served as great fathers giving love and guidance to their families. Men's Health Month and Father's day are June celebrations that offer an opportunity to show our appreciation and ensure the well-being of those amazing men in our lives.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) list heart disease, cancer and diabetes among the top ten causes of death among U.S. men. But the risk of these conditions can be drastically reduced or eliminated with a few lifestyle changes. June is a perfect time to start when Men's Health Month is celebrated through health fairs, screenings, education, and other related activities.

MAKE SMALL CHANGES



According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, men should aim for 30-60 minutes of regular aerobic exercise most days along with strength training 2-3 days a week. In addition, a healthy meal plan includes at least 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables daily. Although these guidelines are reasonable, very few Americans have been able to achieve these

recommendations. In fact, a 2015 CDC report found that only 1 out of 10 Americans eat enough fruits and vegetables. And Healthy People 2020 reports over 80% of adults do not meet the guidelines for aerobic and strength training exercise.

Lifestyle changes can be difficult but taking small steps can make the process more manageable. One small step could involve adjusting meals so you can enjoy the foods you love while improving the quality of your overall intake at a comfortable pace. Consider these ideas for menu tweaks for some of most popular foods eaten by men in the U.S. While not all individuals fit into their gender stereotypes, there is an obvious trend in the types of food the average man enjoys.

FINE-TUNE FAVORITES

Nachos - Take it easy on the cheese and sour cream. Try low-fat options such as mozzarella or feta and swap fried tortilla chips for baked. Pack on vegetables like tomatoes, beans, avocado, jalapenos, corn, bell pepper, and onions. Use lean meats: 95% lean ground beef, lean fajita beef or chicken.

Chips and dip - Opt for baked multigrain chips instead of fried. Fresh salsa, homemade guacamole, black bean, hummus, or Greek yogurt based dips are healthy choices. Try Greek yogurt mixed with lemon and ranch seasoning in place of regular ranch.

Buffalo Wings - Bake non-battered wings tossed in spices or a light sauce. To go even lighter, choose skinless chicken tenders to replace wings. Dip them in homemade yogurt ranch dip or hot picante sauce.

Pizza - Ask for thin crust, less cheese and plenty of vegetables. Go easy on fatty meats by choosing chicken or hamburger over pepperoni or sausage. And pick tomato sauce over white sauces like Alfredo.

Burgers - Use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey. Top your burger with veggies and use mustard or ketchup instead of mayonnaise. When it comes to the bun, whole-wheat has for more fiber.

BBQ - Use lean meats and marinate overnight instead of pouring on BBQ sauce at the table. Add grilled vegetables to your BBQ like zucchini, squash, cauliflower, eggplant, asparagus and Portobello mushrooms. Grilled fruits - banana, peach, grapefruit, mango, and cantaloupe - are a delicious sweet treat that's great with yogurt on the side.



By Neva Cochran, MS, RDN, LD, Nutrition Communications Consultant and Adrian Boulter, Senior Nutrition Major, Texas Woman's University