

I know it's a bit early to be thinking about the Super Bowl but some of you may be planning to host a gathering and want to plan ahead. Keep in mind you can have a great time watching the game and socializing with friends while sticking to your healthy eating goals for 2005. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Have a small healthy snack before going out or watching the game to avoid overeating during the event
- Choose the more nutrient dense foods like fruits, veggies and grains
- Make just one trip to the party buffet
- Use a plate for even the smallest snack-you can better track your eating and you will eat less
- Moderate your alcohol intake-alcohol is "empty calories" which offer no nutrition and leads to a drop in blood sugar which lead to hunger

If you are hosting or watching the big game in your own home, consider serving healthy fare! Here are some ideas: fresh veggies with dips made with low-fat yogurt or sour cream, fruit kabobs, pizza topped with loads of vegetables and less cheese, popcorn, pretzels with mustard dip, hummus with baked pita chips, baked tortilla chips and salsa, whole grain breads and lean meats and cheeses, chili with lots of beans and veggies, broth based or low-fat cream soup, apple slices with low-fat caramel dip, homemade cereal mix with nuts and dried fruit, skinless chicken breast strips dipped in milk and seasoned bread crumbs and baked (425 degrees for 10 minutes) and served with honey mustard or barbecue dipping sauces.

How about a walk at halftime or movement during the commercials? That could help with the energy/calorie balance for the day!

Here's a different healthy spread and homemade pita chips to accompany it!

Roasted Red Pepper Hummus

1 jar (8 oz.) roasted red peppers, water packed
1 can (15 oz.) chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 can (15 oz.) white kidney beans, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup sesame paste (tahini)
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. ground cumin
Freshly ground pepper to taste

In food processor or blender, combine all ingredients except pepper. Process until smooth. If necessary, thin down with a few drops of olive oil. Season to taste with pepper. Serve with fresh veggies, pita bread wedges, pita chips (below) or whole grain crackers.

Makes 16 servings. Per serving=87 calories, 3 total fat (less than 1 g saturated fat), 13 g carbs, 4 g protein, 1 g fiber, 325 mg sodium.

Pita Chips

12 pita bread pockets (wheat is best!)
¼ cup olive oil
½ tsp. ground black pepper
1 tsp. garlic powder (or use fresh garlic!)
½ tsp. dried basil
1 tsp. dried chervil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Separate pita top layer from bottom layer. Cut each circle into 8 wedges/triangles. Place on baking sheet. In small bowl combine other ingredients. Brush

each triangle with mixture. Bake for 7 minutes or until light and crispy. Watch carefully as they tend to burn easily!

Here's a soup that goes together very quickly and easily! It could be part of your Super Bowl fare or a weekend lunch or dinner. Leftovers are easily heated for a workday lunch.

Hearty Pasta and Bean Soup

1 Tbsp. olive oil
3/4 cup chopped onion
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. dried basil
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 cups tomato puree
1/2 cup tomato paste
1 (15 oz.) can cannellini or navy beans
1 bay leaf
freshly ground black pepper
1 cup raw small pasta
6 Tbsp, freshly grated Parmesan cheese (optional garnish)

In large soup pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and cook for 5 minutes until it begins to soften. Add garlic, oregano and basil and cook for 32 minutes more. Add chicken broth, tomato puree and paste, beans and bay leaf. Season with pepper and simmer for 15 minutes. Add pasta and simmer for 10 minutes or until pasta is al dente (barely tender). Serve soup in large bowls with sprinkling of parmesan cheese, if desired.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving=249 calories, 6 g fat, 2 g sat fat, 14 g protein, 9 g fiber, 237 mg sodium.

This parfait could be a simple breakfast or bedtime snack. It helps in meeting your dairy and fruit intake for the day as well!

Yogurt Parfait

3/4 cup plain or artificially sweetened fruit nonfat yogurt
1/4 cup berries (fresh or frozen and thawed)
1/4 cup mango (or peaches or another fruit of your choice)
1/4 cup low fat granola or sweetened flake cereal
1 Tbsp. shredded coconut (or chopped nuts)

In a tall glass, layer one third of yogurt, then half of fruit and all of cereal. Follow with another one third of yogurt, and rest of fruit. Final layer is remaining yogurt topped with coconut or nuts.

Makes 1 serving=250 calories, 4 g fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium, 4 g fiber, 13 g protein, 400mg calcium

Eat healthy and enjoy!

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