



Soup's On

By Diane Whitten, CCE Nutrition & Food Educator

Winter is a great time for enjoying soup to warm you up when the temperature outside is bitter cold. Soups can be the base of a very nutritious meal especially when they include lots of vegetables. Most people don't get the recommended servings of vegetables each day; about two and a half cups a day for women and three cups a day for men. The recommended daily servings for children varies depending on their age. However, more is always better when it comes to vegetables, especially the non-starchy vegetables that are very low in carbohydrates and calories.

Sodium

A potential pitfall of eating soup is the sodium content. Sodium is one of the nutrients in food that almost everyone gets too much of. An excess of sodium in our diets leads to high blood pressure. Much research shows that as a person's sodium intake decreases, so does their blood pressure. High blood pressure increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease. Therefore, adults and children should limit their intake of sodium.

The most recent U.S. Dietary Guidelines suggest that all people strive for 2,300 milligrams (mg) or less of sodium each day. The recommendation is reduced to 1,500 mg for people over 50, and African Americans of any age, or for people with hypertension, diabetes or chronic kidney disease.

Some soups are so high in sodium that one serving can supply over 2/3 or more of the suggested daily intake. For example, one brand of microwavable chicken noodle soup that comes in a cup has 1480 mg of sodium. Another brand of canned condensed chicken noodle soup supplies 890 mg per cup.

It's a good idea when you're buying pre-made soup to read the nutrition facts panel on the back of the label to look at the sodium content. Don't count on the front of the label to make your choices. The front of the label might have statements such as "Healthy", "Reduced Sodium" or "Light in Sodium". One of the "Healthy" soup brands has 410 mg of sodium in one-half cup, compared to the brand that was "Light in Sodium" that has 290 mg in a full cup.

Home-made

One of the most rewarding things a home cook can do is make a home-made soup. It makes the kitchen smell great and you can make a soup you know is healthy for your family. When you make your own soup, you control the amount of salt (sodium) that goes into it. To make the job easier and quicker many home cooks start with a store-bought broth. It's important to read the nutrition facts panel on those too when you buy them to compare the sodium content. They can vary from 800 mg to 150 mg sodium in one cup.

If you're following a recipe, you can reduce the amount of or eliminate the salt in it. More salt can always be added at the table, but it can't be taken out. For a delicious low sodium soup include herbs and spices for depth of flavor instead of relying on salt.

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Farmers' Market Recipes

Don't forget to support our local farmers by shopping at one of the winter Farmers' Markets where you can find the main ingredients in these soups.

Gingery Carrot Soup

2 pounds carrots, peeled & sliced

1 medium potato, peeled & diced

4 cups low sodium vegetable stock or water

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 large onion, chopped

2 small cloves garlic, crushed

2 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon fresh grated ginger

1 cup buttermilk (or 1 cup milk plus 1 tablespoon lemon juice)

Combine carrots, potato, stock or water and salt in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer 10-15 minutes. Melt butter in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, sauté until onions are wilted. Puree everything together in a blender or food processor until smooth. Return the puree to the saucepan and whisk in the ginger and buttermilk. Heat gently on low. Do not boil after buttermilk is added. Makes 8 servings.

Per Serving: 120 calories; 4 g fat (2 g sat); 10 mg cholesterol; 19 g carbohydrate; 3 g protein; 4 g fiber; 270 mg sodium. **Nutrition Bonus:** Vitamin A (380% daily value), Vitamin C (20% dv).

Recipe for Potato Leek Soup on page 3



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Potato Leek Soup

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 cups sliced leeks (2 large leeks)

1 cup chopped celery (2 stalks)

3 cups peeled diced potatoes

2 quarts low sodium vegetable broth or water

¼ cup evaporated milk or heavy cream

1 teaspoon pepper

1 tablespoon fresh rosemary

Slice leeks in half lengthwise, wash carefully to remove any soil and slice white and light green parts into 1/8-inch pieces. Heat olive oil in a saucepan on medium heat, add the leeks and celery, and sauté slowly being careful not to brown the vegetables. Add potatoes, vegetable stock or water, pepper and rosemary; cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 30 minutes. Mash the vegetables or puree the soup roughly in a food processor. Add heavy cream or evaporated milk to hot soup before serving. Makes 10 servings.

Note: The soup minus the heavy cream keeps very well in the refrigerator for a few days or the freezer for longer storage. Reheat soup and add cream before serving.

Per Serving: 100 calories; 5 g fat (1 g sat); 0 mg cholesterol; 14 g carbohydrate; 2 g protein; 2 g fiber; 125 mg sodium. **Nutrition Bonus:** Vitamin A (15% daily value), Vitamin C (25% dv).

Contact Diane Whitten at Cornell Cooperative Extension with your questions about food and nutrition: 518-885-8995, dwhitten@cornell.edu.