

Veggies: Sneak 'em Tricks

Spaghetti sauce: Add 1 to 2 cups mixed frozen vegetables to 1 26-ounce jar of pasta sauce; puree in blender. May puree peas, corn, green beans, bell peppers, mushrooms, or any leftover vegetable to add to a jar of prepared spaghetti sauce.

Mashed potatoes: Puree white beans or cooked cauliflower in skim milk before adding to potatoes, or add pureed butternut squash with mashed potatoes.

Salsa: Add pureed spinach or green beans. Chop soft-boiled broccoli stems, and mix into chunky salsa.

Tacos and Burritos: Add finely grated carrots to filling.

Hamburgers: Mix pureed broccoli or peas into ground beef before making patties. If the mixture is too soft, add dried breadcrumbs.

Pizza and Pasta Sauce: Add pureed beets or carrots to sauce; then add extra spices.

Sauces: Use vegetable juice or broth in sauces in place of water as the ingredient.

Omelets: Slip cooked, pureed sweet potatoes, squash, or carrots into omelet while preparing.

Red applesauce: Puree canned beets with applesauce. Serve hot or cold. Or you could add sweet potatoes or butternut squash to applesauce. Blend well.

Soups: Here's a simple recipe:

In a medium saucepan, sauté 1 cup finely chopped onion in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil until tender. Combine the onion in a blender or food processor with cooked vegetables and purée until smooth. Return to saucepan and thin with broth, or low-fat milk. For extra calcium add powdered milk as well. Simmer and season to taste. Potatoes, carrots, winter squash, cauliflower, and broccoli—just about any cooked (or leftover) vegetable can be made into a creamy, comforting soup. Try adding puréed vegetables to canned low-sodium soups as well. Use a low sodium vegetable juice instead of chicken or beef broth when making soups for a veggie extra boost.

Ketchup: Blend just about any strained veggie with ketchup; ketchup masks the smell and taste well.

Dip or Sandwich spread: Instead of mayonnaise spread mashed avocado with a touch of lemon juice. Roast a bunch of your favorite veggies and puree them in a food processor with cream cheese or yogurt. Serve with crackers or use as a sandwich spread or dip.

Sauces: Use vegetables as sauces. Try pureed roasted red peppers seasoned with herbs and a bit of lemon juice, then drizzled over fish. Or puree butternut or acorn squash with carrots, grated ginger, and a bit of brown sugar for a yummy topping for chicken or turkey. Cooked vegetables are easily converted into sauces with a blender. Use canned pumpkin for dessert. Just sprinkle it with cinnamon and mix in 2 packets of Splenda. Since every ½ cup serving is only 40 calories and 3.5 g of fiber, use it as a topping over low fat ice cream or vanilla pudding.

Sources: Wegmans.com

Excerpted with permission from *Stealth Health: How to Sneak Nutrition Painlessly Into Your Diet*, Viking, \$24.96, by Evelyn Tribole, M.S., R.D.

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