

# HEALTH BEAT



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## Tips, tricks for healthy food substitutions

(BPT) - Spring is a time of new beginnings. For some of us, that means shedding a few pounds along with our heavy winter clothes. Simple and healthy food substitutions can help. Some substitutions are easy, for example, substituting brown rice or quinoa for white rice or adding barley in with brown rice to add another type of whole grain. Other substitutions are completely unexpected. To be inspired and jazz up any meal time, take cues from culinary experts.

Chef Andrew Lyman, culinary director, The Art Institute of Austin, suggests, "It is not uncommon to use brown sugar, for white sugar, but I often challenge my students to use other ingredients as a sweetener - for example, using a teaspoon of vanilla can often produce similar results as a cup of sugar and it saves over 400 calories. Another option is using prunes for butter, especially in brownies or other dark baked goods - 3/4 cup of prunes with 1/4 cup of boiling water, puree to combine and you have a great option."

Chef instructor Peachy Seiden from The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Cincinnati-Ohio says, "Using pureed fruit warmed on the stovetop with a bit of honey is a great substitute for classic maple syrup - decreasing the sugar content and pro-

viding an extra dose of antioxidants and vitamins and minerals."

Elliott Hilton, culinary director for The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Michigan, adds, "Using non-fat Greek yogurt when the recipe calls for mayonnaise or sour cream works really well since it's a lot less fat and a good way to add additional protein."

Here are a few more substitutions you can make in your recipes:

\* Unsweetened applesauce for sugar (can be in a 1:1 ratio, but reduce the amount of liquid in the recipe by 1/4 cup).

\* Mashed bananas for fats. The creamy, thickening power of very ripe mashed bananas is the ideal consistency in place of one cup of butter or oil.

\* Spaghetti squash for pasta is a natural substitute. Simply roast and pull apart with a fork and voila.

\* Using coconut oil instead of butter adds additional health benefiting nutrients and the flavor is superb.

\* Reducing the calorie count of meals is helpful, but small adjustments make a big impact. "Something simple that I recommend is to make broths, soups and stews in advance and chill them. Before reheating, lift the hardened fat that formed on the surface. In a pinch, you can also float a few ice cubes to



help harden the fat so it can be lifted and removed," says Hilton.

\* "Using brewed tea (green, white, oolong, black) as a 'liquid ingredient' to our sauce or stews add another flavor dimension, not to mention the added protective antioxidants" says Seiden.

\* Meat consumption overall is an area that can be reduced tremendously both for the sake of health and calories. "We make a mean veggie burger here at the student-run restaurant - one that would make any meat lover a veggie burger convert," says Lyman.

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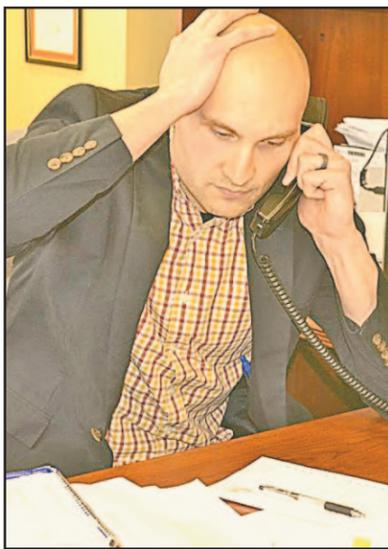
## Key to managing stress: *ID* causes and find solutions

(BPT) - If there is one aspect of life in the modern world that affects all of us, it's stress. In fact, it's so prevalent and can have such a serious effect on our health, that April has been named Stress Awareness Month. Yet despite the potential negative effects of stress, it can also be beneficial.

Stress can lead to a wide variety of health conditions including impaired immune function, headaches, sleep problems, cardiovascular diseases, uncharacteristic anger, anxiety and even depression, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Stress can also have a negative financial effect. It has been estimated that stress-related medical expenses, lost wages and lost productivity among employers costs the U.S. economy upward of \$300 billion per year.

The key to managing stress is in our ability to identify its causes, according to Anna Zendell, PhD, MSW, and Carol

Shenise, MS, RN of Excelsior College's School of Health Sciences. Events or conditions that cause stress trigger our mind and body into action in an effort to cope with the situation. When this happens, the body releases adrenaline and cortisol which can provide quick energy and sharpened focus. This can be beneficial when experiencing short-term situations such as running late for an appointment, preparing for a test at school, having to take a traffic detour, or mak-



short- or long-term, can depend upon the source of the factors or stressors that caused it in the first place. There could be environmental factors such as the change in seasons and natural or man-made toxins. Social factors such as living or working

in crowded conditions and financial downturns are common triggers. Even our personal values and beliefs can come in conflict with everyday events which can cause or aggravate an existing situation. Understanding what causes or increases our stress levels is the first step toward finding a means to lessen its negative effects.

The impacts of stress on daily life are often unique to each individual as these tend to manifest in our weaker areas. Our bodies and minds can become fatigued and we feel tired or worn out. Our immune systems can become slow to respond so that we become ill more often or recovery from an existing illness becomes much more difficult to achieve. One or more important areas of our social lives may be affected such as work and personal relationships, and parenting. We just don't find pleasure and take less time to do the things that

will help to relieve stress and promote relaxation.

While we cannot always change or eliminate the things that trigger stress in our lives, we can make a conscious effort to change our behaviors in response to these factors. We can say no to new responsibilities, or put limits to what we take on. We can take care of our bodies by healthful eating, drinking plenty of water, and exercising. We can use various stress reduction strategies such as setting aside some quiet time for ourselves, adding humor to our day, visiting with friends, or getting a massage.

Stress-causing situations may be common place in our fast-paced society but this doesn't mean that we have to accept their consequences as a fact of life. This, Zendell and Shenise say, is where exercising our personal power to take control and either change the conditions or our response to situations can make all the difference.

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