

Healthy Eating

Take Comfort: Favorite Foods, Guilt Reduced

(NAPSA)—It's ironic. The weather turns cold; thoughts turn to traditional comfort foods such as macaroni and cheese, meat loaf and chewy, gooey chocolate chip cookies warm from the oven. Then next thing we know, we're making New Year's resolutions to eat more healthily.

But there's good news: "We don't have to deny ourselves the foods to which we have emotional attachments," said Ginny Bean, founder of Ginny's catalog and www.Ginnys.com. "We just need to be open-minded about new comfort foods and healthier alternatives to old ones."

Bean offers the following tips for enjoying comfort food without consuming all those extra calories and fat:

- Pump up the nutritional value of favorite comfort foods by adding vegetables or beans.

- For sweet comfort foods, add more fruit, decrease the sugar (or use half sugar substitute), reduce the fat ingredient down a third or so, and switch half the flour to whole wheat when you can.

- Understand what makes a comfort food. Creamy foods are comfort foods, so look for something like yogurt or milk. Warm foods are also comforting, so warm up some oatmeal or drink a cup of tea. Antioxidants can be comforting, so have some strawberries or a small amount of chocolate-covered raisins.

- Seek healthier alternatives to classic comfort foods. Possible



You can pump up the nutritional value of favorite comfort foods by adding vegetables and beans.

substitutions include sorbet for ice cream; air-popped popcorn for potato chips; baked sweet potato fries for French fries; or soba noodles for spaghetti.

- Use healthy cooking methods. As a rule, rapid cooking techniques retain foods' nutrients better than slower methods. Countertop convection ovens cook up to 30 percent faster than regular ovens, allowing you to bake, broil, roast, steam and even low-fat air fry—all without added fats or oil. Even your cookware can make a difference. Silicone-rimmed lids for pots and pans capture foods' natural juices for healthier, tastier meals. When roasting, it's best to use a pan with a rack or a self-basting cooker, so fat can drip away from the meat.

For more healthy cooking tips and products, call (800) 487-9024 to request a catalog or visit www.Ginnys.com.