Tasty Oatmeal Cookies

Ingredients:

½ cup butter, softened
½ cup sugar
½ cup brown sugar
1 egg
2 Tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup whole wheat flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 ½ cups quick oats

♦ Mix first 6 ingredients until well blended.
♦ Add last three ingredients and mix well.
♦ Lightly coat a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray.
♦ Drop by spoonful or shape into balls and place evenly on the cookie sheet.
♦ Bake at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until cookies are lightly browned on the bottom.

**Instant or steel cut, what’s the difference?**

Warm oatmeal can be a good start to winter mornings. It just seems to make the cold blast of air that hits you when you walk out the door seem more bearable. If you have been confused by the different types of oatmeal, here is your quick lesson.

Most of us know we are supposed to eat more whole grains but sometimes it is hard to know exactly which foods have 100% whole grain. According to Tammy Roberts, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, “Oatmeal is a whole grain but the thing you may wonder is if instant oatmeal is as healthy as steel cut oatmeal.”

Oatmeal is classified as a whole grain because it contains all of the parts of the oat grain including the bran, endosperm and germ. The interesting thing is that when we eat the regular oatmeal most of us grew up with, we aren’t eating the grain in its original form. We are usually eating rolled oats. Rolled oats have been steamed and flattened. That process decreases the cooking time so old fashioned oatmeal can be prepared in about 10-25 minutes.

Quick-cooking oats that can be prepared in 3-5 minutes have been cut even more finely so that the cooking time can be reduced.

Some people prefer steel cut oats. The primary difference between steel cut oats and rolled oats is the shape of the grain. Steel cut oats are not flattened. The grain is cut into thirds and then packaged for sale.

When preparing steel cut oats you use four cups of water to each cup of oats. The cooking time for steel cut oats is 30-40 minutes. Steel cut oats have a chewy texture and a hearty flavor.

A popular product in many households because of our hectic lifestyles is instant oatmeal. So that the cereal can be prepared quickly, the oat grain is partially cooked, dried and then rolled very thin.

If you read the label of many of the instant oatmeal packages you will find that they have nutrients that the old fashioned and steel cut oats don’t have. That is because nutrients have been added.

A disadvantage of some instant oatmeal is that a significant amount of sugar has been added. Look for packages of instant oatmeal that contain less than 7 grams of added sugar per packet.

All oatmeal is a good source of fiber, magnesium and thiamine. It also contains phosphorus, potassium, iron and copper.

Oatmeal is a good source of soluble fiber which acts as a sponge in the digestive tract to help remove cholesterol from the body.

The thing that most children care about is that oatmeal tastes good. Add some dried cherries or raisins to your child’s next bowl.
January is Egg month.

According to Melissa Bess, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, “Eggs provide good quality protein, many nutrients, and only 75 calories. They are a good protein punch in the morning or can add protein to other meals.”

Eggs are a good replacement for meat at meals. Meat is a big part of our grocery budget, so replacing the meat with eggs at one meal weekly can save money and still provide protein. Protein is important to keep us full longer and help build and repair our body.

Eggs should be cooked to a temperature of 160 degrees F (white and yolk should be firm) and raw or undercooked eggs should not be eaten. Wash anything that comes into contact with raw eggs and put eggs in the refrigerator within two hours of purchase or use. Eggs are best stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator (not the door).

For best quality, use eggs within three to five weeks of the purchase date. The sell-by date may pass during that time, but they are still safe to eat within that three to five week window.

Here are some ways to add eggs to your meals (not just for breakfast):

- Make a frittata using eggs and any veggies you enjoy. You can find frittata recipes online or in many cookbooks.
- Make a breakfast burrito using eggs, meat, and veggies.
- Add eggs to your salad for protein power.
- Make an egg sandwich with tasty bread, veggies, and your choice of seasonings and sauce.
- Enjoy hard-boiled or deviled eggs for a snack.

Feeling Blue?


Those are the words many of us link to depression - those symptoms listed on pamphlets at the doctor’s office and antidepressant commercials tell us to look for.

According to Saralee Jamieson, MU Extension human development specialist, “Depression affects different people in different ways: for some, it can lead to those dark thoughts that impact daily life and become debilitating; for others, the signs may be a little less obvious.” What we know for everyone is that depression is not a simple bout with the blues and you can’t just snap out of it; it’s a serious medical illness that requires treatment.

You’ll do what you have to, like go to work and grocery shop, but the things you did simply for pleasure, you just can’t seem to find the desire or energy to do. You may also start to distance yourself from loved ones and lose interest in sex.

You’re easily irritated. What used to be no big deal is now infuriating. You may be more restless or anxious. Men, in particular, tend to get angrier or more aggressive faster if they’re depressed. Women’s symptoms are typically more based in feelings of sadness, worthlessness and guilt.

You can’t concentrate, can’t remember appointments and have a tough time making decisions, it may be something else. Excessive tiredness is another symptom and mundane tasks seem to take too much effort. You eat less and sleep more. Or you eat more and sleep less. Either way, big changes in appetite and bedtime routines can be a sign of depression.

You have unexplained pain. Many conditions can cause headaches, backaches, cramps and other physical ailments - depression is one of them. The two are closely connected: people with chronic pain have three times the average risk of mood disorders, and depressed patients have three times the risk of developing chronic pain.

If these symptoms sound familiar and happen often, talk to your doctor.