

# No Time to Cook

**Make quick and tasty meals from a mix.**

Packaged mixes like au gratin potatoes, macaroni and cheese or flavored rice and pasta can easily be turned into healthy and satisfying meals. You save time and still eat healthy. Packaged mixes and soups are often high in sodium and saturated fat, but there are ways to reduce the sodium and fat without changing the taste. These additions may also allow you to cook once and eat twice. The table below shows you how to make these changes.

Packaged mix	Changes	Additions
Macaroni and cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce added margarine by half or leave out.</li> <li>• Use low-fat or fat-free milk.</li> <li>• Add extra whole-wheat macaroni</li> <li>• Choose Option A or B (at right).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cook ½ cup additional whole-wheat macaroni.</li> <li>• Option A Add the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 1 to 2 cups cooked vegetables</li> <li>◦ Canned tuna in water or salmon, drained; or cooked chicken</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Option B Add the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 1 cup canned tomatoes, drained</li> <li>◦ ½ pound lean ground beef, browned and drained; 1 can black or pinto beans</li> <li>◦ 1 teaspoon chili powder</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Seasoned rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce added margarine by half or leave out.</li> <li>• Use your own herbs and spices instead of the seasoning packet. Try garlic powder, cilantro, thyme, basil, or oregano.</li> <li>• Add extra regular rice while cooking or prepare instant rice to add.</li> <li>• Add brown rice, bulgur or whole-grain barley. The cooking times may be longer for some of these grains. Cook separately and then combine if needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¼ cup rice and ½ cup water or ½ cup rice plus 1 cup water</li> <li>• Then add one or more:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 1 cup canned red or black beans, drained and rinsed</li> <li>◦ 1 cup chicken or ham, cooked</li> <li>◦ ½ cup celery, sliced</li> <li>◦ ½ cup green pepper, chopped</li> <li>◦ 1 cup canned tomatoes, drained</li> <li>◦ ¼ cup shredded cheese</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Noodles in sauce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce added margarine by half or leave out.</li> <li>• Use low-fat or fat-free milk.</li> <li>• Cook extra whole-wheat noodles to combine with noodles in the mix.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a separate pan, cook 1 cup whole-wheat noodles, drain.</li> <li>• Then add one or more of following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 1 to 2 cups peas or broccoli, cooked</li> <li>◦ 1 can tuna in water, drained or 1 cup chicken, cooked</li> <li>◦ 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped</li> <li>◦ ¼ cup shredded cheese</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Packaged mix	Changes	Additions
Scalloped and au gratin potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce margarine by half.</li> <li>• Use low-fat or fat-free milk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stove-top method: Add extra medium potato, cooked and sliced. Add extra potato when stirring in milk (microwave a potato while dry potatoes from mix simmer).</li> <li>• Then add one or more of following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 1 cup green vegetables</li> <li>◦ 1 cup ham, chicken or turkey, chopped</li> <li>◦ ¼ cup red or green pepper, diced</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Canned bean soup		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add can of white or red beans, drained and rinsed.</li> <li>• ½ cup water</li> </ul>
Canned cream of potato soup		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 can creamed corn</li> <li>• 1 cup low-fat or fat-free milk</li> <li>• Then add one or more of following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ ½ cup celery (cook in microwave), sliced</li> <li>◦ ½ teaspoon dry onion, minced</li> <li>◦ ½ cup carrots (cook in microwave), grated</li> <li>◦ Garnish with shredded cheese</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Bread stuffing mixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce margarine by half.</li> <li>• Use low-salt chicken broth or salt-free homemade chicken broth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add 1 to 2 cups extra dry whole-wheat bread crumbs (use blender to make dry bread crumbs).</li> <li>• Add extra spices and herbs, if desired like garlic, onion powder, sage, thyme.</li> </ul>

### Putting it together for better nutrition

Round out your meal with fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Fruits and vegetables are a great source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals that are good for your health. Whether you eat a frozen dinner or prepare a convenient mix, round out your meal with fruits and vegetables. Top off your meal with a glass of milk or water.

