

SPEEDY BARIATRIC COOKING HACKS

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Here are our top ten Dietitian approved tips for saving time in the kitchen!

- 1) Buy frozen vegetables** - They're pre-chopped, cook quickly, and are great for cutting down on food waste; especially in the early weeks and months after surgery when the amount eaten at a meal is relatively small.
- 2) Use pre-cooked potatoes** - These are found in the chiller part of the vegetable aisle or in the tinned vegetables section in the supermarket and you simply pop them in the microwave or in a pan to cook in minutes. Add 1 to 4 small potatoes to your plate depending on how many you can manage and always eat them after the protein and vegetable parts of your meal (as these are more nutrient dense).
- 3) Keep frozen berries in the freezer** - As well as containing more vitamin C than their fresh equivalents, frozen berries are an ideal addition to porridge and help to thicken smoothies when blended. If you're on the fluid or pureed stage after surgery then you may want to pop some in a bowl in the fridge for them to thaw out before using.
- 4) Use ready made jelly and low fat custard as dessert** - This combination makes a speedy and satisfying sweet treat that provides protein as well as calcium. You should be aiming to eat a minimum of 60-80g of protein a day and every source of dairy counts!
- 5) Use a wholemeal pitta bread or a wholemeal wrap for pizza base** - These options are less starchy and doughy than regular pizza bases and mean that you don't have to miss out on pizza night. Simply add some passata (sieved tomatoes), vegetables of choice and a sprinkling of low fat cheese before baking in the oven for 10 minutes!
- 6) Buy low sugar sauces** - When you're short on time a jarred sauce can be useful. Look for those that provide under 5g of sugar per 100g and less than 3g of fat per 100g. Don't be afraid of sugar though; as some of it will be natural from foods such as tomatoes. In order to see if your sauce has any added sugar you'll need to look at the ingredients list; the closer to the top of the list 'sugar' is then the more added sugar it has in it.
- 7) Stock up on tinned beans and lentils as well as grain sachets such as quinoa** - Pre-cooked legumes and grains are such a time saver; you can throw them in a curry or chilli or simply heat them in a microwave. They also make it harder to make too much when really all you want is a quarter of your plate filled with grains (carbs).
- 8) Swap garlic bulbs for minced garlic** - Jarred garlic, often known as 'lazy garlic', is a great addition to your fridge as it's a quick way to add a boost of flavour to most dishes. After all, the more flavoursome your dish, the more likely it will be that you will feel satisfied after eating it!
- 9) Buy pre-cooked chicken** - Rotisserie chicken is a great buy for those nights that you don't have 30 to 90 minutes to roast your own. It flakes up easily and you can add some paprika, diced peppers and onions along with some salsa and sweet potato for a quick Mexican inspired dish!
- 10) Make overnight oats for busy mornings** - If cooking porridge is too time consuming on a morning, make up some overnight oats the night before to grab and eat at your desk. To make them simply mix equal parts (e.g. 1/2 cup) of milk, oats and yoghurt in a jar, add the lid and pop them in the fridge over night ... then top with berries or sliced banana and flaked almonds and cinnamon before enjoying!