

Hot Chips & weight loss

Potato chips are one of the most tempting morsels on any careful food eater's list. But they're also disastrous in terms of fat and energy content.

There are ways however, of lowering the fat content and keeping the taste. Here are just some of them.

1. Use frozen, not thawed chips: Potato chips which are pre-cut and frozen form an instant crust when dropped in oil, thus minimising water loss and fat absorption. Thawed chips release more water into the surrounding oil and lower the oil temperature.
2. Cook at the right temperature: The best temperature for cooking lower fat chips is between 180-185°C. Cooking chips at a lower temperature prevents the formation of a crust on the chip surface which prevents the excessive absorption of fat. Estimates suggest that 40% more fat is absorbed when the temperature is 10% lower than the recommended cooking temperature of 180-185°C. Cooking at excessively high temperatures can change the nature of the oil to make it less healthy.
3. Use poly or mono-unsaturated oils: The type of oil in which they are cooked effects the fat quality of chips. Stable oils with a high level of mono-unsaturated fats such as Sunola oil (from sunflower) are known to be relatively stable and long lasting. Other apparent healthy choices such as cottonseed oil and soybean based oils are less stable and more susceptible to undesirable changes under high temperature.
4. Maintain the quality of the oil: Older oil/fat is characterised by a darkness in colour and tendency to smoke. Older oils inhibit the formation of crust on the chip, which reduces fat absorption. Oils should be discarded regularly and not over-used as continual heating can change the structure of the oil to include more 'trans' fatty acids.
5. Use the right type of chip: The surface area of the chip affects absorption of fat in cooking. Because of its greater surface area, a 'crinkle cut' chip is likely to absorb more fat and therefore have a higher fat content than a plain chip. Bigger chips also have less surface area to total volume than small, thin chips. Avoid potato crisps as these have the most fat of any types of chips (up to 38%)
6. Oven Bake or Micro-Wave: Potato chips can be oven baked without oil. Thin potato crisps can be cooked in a microwave using a standard chip maker from a household appliance store without added fat, but with tasty herbs and spices added.

For more information on diet and nutrition go to www.lifestylemedicine.net.au

OR email: info@lifestylemedicine.net.au