

Believe it or not, it's low-fat Fettuccine Alfredo

Class teaches healthy eatin' with good flavor



Shannon Keaveny/Spilyay



LEFT: Cindy Conrad, Wellness Center nutritionist intern, demonstrates to the class what makes a good salad packed with vitamins. Strong colors, she says, represent more vitamins. TOP: Laura Spaulding puts steamy fettuccine in a low-fat alfredo sauce. The cooking class focused on cutting down on saturated fats.

Cindy Conrad, dietician intern at the Health and Wellness Center, slowly melted margarine in a saucepan and assured the class the Fettuccine Alfredo would be good.

The margarine, she said, doesn't have trans-fatty acids, which causes high cholesterol.

The whole cream, she explained would be substituted, for fat-free half and half and the Parmesan cheese would be low fat too. The finished product contained

45 grams less fat and 100 fewer calories.

The class watched curiously and maybe a little suspiciously.

A dark green salad, mixed with spinach, and topped with dark red cherry tomatoes and shredded carrots was also prepared.

Spinach, she explained, is a good source of iron, folic acid, and calcium. Dark green lettuce has more nutrients than the light-colored and tomatoes are high in vitamin A.

The Italian dinner, provided by the Health and Wellness Center, as part of an effort to teach the importance of diet in prevention of ill health, was prepared in one half of an hour. The finished product was a delightful light meal that tribal members of all ages enjoyed.

The classes are offered September to May each year, the first and third Wednesday of each month. Each month has a theme-this month features quick, healthy recipes for Italian cuisine.

"We try to offer good ideas, that are fairly easy and healthy, and try to incorporate those ideas into their lives," said Laura Spaulding, Health and Wellness Center dietician and instructor for cooking classes.

The class focuses on less saturated fat, the fats responsible for heart disease and obesity. It teaches less fat doesn't necessarily mean less taste.

"People are afraid," said Spaulding, "that if you lighten up your diet, it will make your food awful."

The ingredients are usually available at the Warm Springs Market, making it easy for participants. At times, a trip to Madras is necessary to obtain

ingredients for the meals.

Spaulding says, as a dietician, practical application is important.

"Some people would never believe low-fat fettuccine could be good. We have to actually provide examples and this class is an excellent way to do that."

Next focus: Traditional foods

The cooking classes in November will focus on the traditional foods of the tribes of Warm Springs.

"We'd like to highlight that traditional foods are really the healthiest available," said Spaulding.

Game meat, such as venison, bison, and elk, has less saturated fat. Salmon contains omega 3 acids, which actually clean arteries that have accumulated too much saturated fat.

The traditional Lukameen soup is very healthy source of both carbohydrates and protein. Roots are a good source of vitamins and minerals with virtually no fat. They are also a carbohydrate source that is not refined.

A high protein diet with good complex carbohydrates is excellent, said Spaulding about the traditional Warm Springs diet.

Traditional cultures ate more vegetables, less fat, and expended more energy to get food.

In today's society of convenience, people can achieve a similar diet as their ancestors with a thoughtful approach.

"Ideally if most people ate 3-5 servings per day vegetables, decreased saturated fats and walked a half hour, we'd be in business," said Spaulding.

For more information about cooking classes call Health and Wellness Center 553-2460

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