

The 7th Conference on Health Care of the Chinese in North America

Healthy Chinese Cuisine

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Abstract

Recently, many nutritionists criticized Chinese cuisine for its increased fat content due to the additional oil used to prepare stirfry dishes. This criticism, however, is not necessarily accurate.

First, not all Chinese cuisine is prepared by deep frying. Indeed, many other methods to prepare Chinese food exist, including but not limited to, steaming, stewing, boiling, roasting, grilling and poaching. No cooking oil is added in any of these cases. If food must be prepared by frying, the least amount of oil should be used and then poured out once the frying pan becomes hot, leaving only a thin coat of oil on the pan. Teflon-coated, non-sticky pans may also be used to decrease the oil content even further. In addition, use of cooking spray such as Mazola corn oil or Weight Watchers canola oil on a non-sticky pan would effectively reduce the amount of oil used in the dish to a bare minimum. The American Heart Association's guideline to maintain the fat generated calories to less than 30% of the daily total calories consumed would, as a result, be easily met by Chinese cuisine.

Second, in Chinese cuisine, meats are either shredded or chopped into small pieces prior to cooking. This procedure results in a drastic reduction in the quantity of meat served. Third, an abundant variety of fresh, preserved and dried vegetables are used frequently in Chinese recipes, ensuring an adequate intake of vegetables.

Based on the above concepts, it is evident that many nutritionists did not make an entirely accurate statement about Chinese cuisine. In fact, when prepared properly, Chinese cuisine can be quite healthy.