

Packaged Food Makeover

Love the convenience of packaged foods? Try these tips for making them healthier — or making them yourself!



Packaged Food	Make It Healthier	Make It Yourself
Ramen noodles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for brands that bake the noodles instead of frying them. • Stir in fresh or frozen veggies. Try broccoli, peas, edamame (soy beans), or spinach. • Add protein if you like. Try leftover cooked chicken, fish, or beef. Or, add cubes of tofu. • Use only half of the seasoning packet. 	<p>Cook whole grain angel hair pasta and your favorite chopped veggies in low-sodium broth until tender. Add leftover cooked chicken, fish, or beef, cubed tofu, or thawed edamame. Cook until heated through. Season with low-sodium soy sauce.</p>
“Just add meat” boxed meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey. • Drain fat from cooked meat. • Add whatever veggies you have on hand. Try broccoli, carrots, or spinach. 	<p>Try these recipes from your book:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheesy Hamburger Skillet (page pgn) • Barley Jambalaya (page pgn) • Tex-Mex Skillet (page pgn)
Boxed macaroni and cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add fresh or frozen broccoli or spinach to the pasta during the last few minutes of cooking. 	<p>Homemade mac and cheese is easier to make than you may think! See page pgn for our stovetop version.</p>
Frozen pizza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy a plain cheese pizza. Add your own toppings. • Top with your favorite cooked veggies. Try broccoli, peppers, onions, and olives. • If you want meat, add low-fat turkey pepperoni. Or, use cooked chicken or turkey sausage. • Look for whole grain crusts if you can find them. If not, look for thin crusts. 	<p>Making your own pizza is fun for the whole family. Try The Works Pizza on page pgn. If you have time, make your own whole grain crust! Use the dough recipe on page pgn.</p>

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Taco dinner kits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for taco kits with whole wheat or corn tortillas. • Use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey. • Cook half the amount of ground meat called for. Drain fat. Stir a can of rinsed and drained black beans or pinto beans into the cooked meat. • Add cooked veggies like chopped tomatoes or shredded zucchini. • Top with low-fat cheese or sour cream. 	Set up a taco buffet! Use the recipe on page pgn. Let each family member add toppings to suit his or her taste.
Frozen or prepackaged Chinese food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If veggies aren't included, stir them in! Try bell peppers, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, and edamame. 	Try the Chinese Veggies and Rice (page pgn) or Asian Noodles with Peanut Butter Sauce (page pgn). Or, make your own stir-fry (page pgn).
Canned ravioli or pasta dishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for products made with whole grain pasta. • Add your favorite cooked veggies. Try zucchini, yellow squash, or spinach. Or, serve with a veggie-filled side salad (see page pgn). 	Make your own pasta dinner using the options on page pgn! Or, try some of our tasty pasta recipes like Spaghetti and Meatballs (page pgn) or Pasta with Beans and Greens (page pgn).
Frozen chicken nuggets or fish sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare labels. Choose a brand with less saturated fat and sodium. • Look for chicken nuggets made with white meat instead of dark. • Serve with a hearty salad (page pgn) or a colorful vegetable side dish (page pgn, pgn, pgn). • If fries on the side are a must, make your own Sweet Potato Fries (page pgn). 	It's easy to make your own chicken fingers or fish sticks! Try the recipes on page pgn and pgn for healthy, baked versions. Serve with colorful side dishes.
Frozen waffles or pancakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for whole grain pancakes or waffles. • Top with fresh fruit and yogurt instead of syrup. 	Make a batch of Orange Oatmeal Pancakes (page pgn) on a day you have extra time. Freeze them in single servings. Pull them out when you're in a hurry.