THE HOLIDAY PRE-HOARD; HELP WITH FEEDING YOUR RELATIVES DURING THE HOLIDAYS

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Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard to give her poor dog a bone. But when she got there her cupboard was bare and so the poor dog had none…

Before the Holiday onslaught of relatives, don't get caught with bare cupboards as Old Mother Hubbard did. Stocked cupboards make life much easier. Prepare yourself by filling your cupboards with the ingredients below to make five nutritious meals using 5 main ingredients. Each meal below serves 4-6 people so double the ingredients as necessary.

First, fill the house with bowls of clementines, fresh apples, pears, bananas and dried apricots and cranberries. Also, enlist the help of your guests to prepare a different salad each night, which means stocking up on salad flavoring agents like slivered almonds, mandarin oranges, dried cranberries and walnuts.

MASTER INGREDIENT LIST FOR MEALS BELOW:

- **FRUIT:** Load up on canned fruit in juice and unsweetened frozen fruit.
- **VEGETABLES:** Pick up baby carrots, tomatoes and fresh baby spinach. Purchase pre-package salad bags so guests can assist in making daily salads.
- **GRAINS:** Grab whole wheat couscous, quick-cooking brown rice, whole wheat tortillas, frozen tortellini, whole wheat mini pitas and refrigerated pizza dough.
- **MEAT:** Get frozen chicken breast tenders and ground round.
- **CANNED/BAGS/CARTONS:** Pick up black beans, fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth, diced tomatoes with green chilies, bag of dry lentils, baked tortilla chips and walnuts.
- **REFRIGERATED:** Grab a dozen eggs, shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese, Parmesan cheese, light sour cream and low-fat cottage cheese.
- **FROZEN:** Pick up corn, chopped onions and broccoli florets.
- **JARS:** Pick up minced garlic, pesto, salsa, *Litehouse* Salsa Ranch dressing and lime juice.
- **SPICES:** Grab *Spice Hunter* Moroccan blend, chili powder, cumin, Mexican seasoning blend and garlic powder.

- **MEAL #1 TACO PIZZA BAKED IN A DISH:** Serves 6. Cook up 1 pound ground round and ½ cup frozen chopped onion (freezer section) in skillet. Drain 1 can diced tomatoes with green chilies and add it, along with 1 t salt-free Mexican seasoning. Take refrigerated can pizza crust dough and press into and slightly up the side of 13"' x 9" baking dish. Spoon beef mixture over crust. Bake at 425 for 12 minutes and top with 1 cup cheese and bake for another 5 more minutes or until

cheese is melted. Serve with salad and cut-up apples. *Nutrition information: 306 calories, 9 g fat, 27 g protein, 25 g carbohydrates, 1 g fiber, 693 mg sodium.*

- **MEAL #2 TORTELLINI WITH BROCCOLI PESTO.** Makes 4. Boil up a bag of frozen cheese tortellini along with a pound of frozen broccoli florets. Drain and return to pan. In a separate bowl, combine 1, 8-ounce container fat-free sour cream, 2 T pesto and ¼ t salt, stirring well. Gently stir sour cream mixture into pasta mixture. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and pepper. Serve immediately. *Nutrition information per 1 ¼ cup serving: 331 calories, 12 g fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, 18 g protein, 38 g carbs, 3 g fiber, 659 mg sodium, 32 mg cholesterol.* Serve with canned pineapple and cottage cheese.

- **MEAL #3 INDIVIDUAL OMELETS FOR DINNER WRAPS**. Makes 4. Set up an omelet buffet. Heat 1 T oil in a large nonstick skillet and add 4 cups baby spinach, stirring until the spinach wilts, 3 to 5 minutes. Season with salt. Beat 5 large eggs and add to pan. Add ½ cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese and cook until the eggs are set, about 2 minutes. Stack four, 8" tortillas on a microwave-safe plate and heat in the microwave until warmed through, 30 to 45 seconds. Put egg mixture in tortilla, add 1 to 2 T salsa and sour cream and wrap it up. Add quick-cooking brown rice and tomatoes. *Nutrition Information per Serving: 320 Calories, 14 grams Total Fat, 3 gram Saturated Fat, 560 milligrams Sodium, 30 grams Carbohydrates, 4 grams Fiber, 16 grams Protein*. Serve with salad made by your guests.

- **MEAL #4 CROCKPOT CHICKEN AND LENTILS SERVED WITH TOASTED MINI WHOLE WHEAT PITAS.** Makes 6 cups. In a 4-5 quart crockpot, combine one, 8-ounce package baby carrots, 1½ cups dry lentils, 1½ pounds frozen chicken breast tenders, 2 T minced garlic, ¾ t salt, 2t salt-free Moroccan rub (look for *Spice Hunter* brand) and two, 14¼-ounce cans fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth. Cover and cook on high for 5 hours. Serve with mini whole wheat pitas and whole wheat couscous. *Nutrition information: 320 calories, 2 g fat, 40 g protein, 33 g carbohydrates, 6 g fiber, 388 mg sodium.*

- **MEAL #5 LAST-MINUTE BLACK BEAN SOUP.** Serves 4-6. Combine a 19-ounce can of black beans, 1 1/2 cups frozen corn kernels, 1/2 cup salsa, 1 tablespoon bottled lime juice, 1/2 teaspoon chili powder, and 1/2 teaspoon cumin in a medium saucepan. Simmer for five minutes. Top with pre-shredded reduced fat cheddar cheese and serve with baked tortilla chips on the side. Put extras on bed of lettuce topped with *Litehouse* Salsa Ranch dressing for a salad on the side.

Stacy is St Luke's Health Solutions dietitian. Health Solutions is St Luke's Corporate Wellness program. Stacy is available for corporate presentations along with a number of nutrition programs related to the corporate wellness program. Call her at 381-2403 for more information..