

DINNER SOLVED!

3 perfect low-carb casseroles

BY CAROLYN WILLIAMS, PHD, RD

A lot of traditional casseroles tend to be high in unhealthy carbs and fat while lacking in nutrients, but making a few simple ingredient changes can create a healthy one-dish dinner. Check out these three tricks below — along with three of my favorite recipes — that not only cut the bad carbs but also boost vegetable intake, increase fiber and other nutrients, and minimize saturated fat and sodium.



ZUCCHINI PIZZA BAKE

Think Vegetables First

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 4½ cups zucchini spirals (about 1 lb. zucchini)
- ⅛ tsp. salt
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ lb. lean ground beef (10% fat) or Italian turkey sausage
- 1½ cups tomato-basil marinara sauce
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can no-salt diced tomatoes, drained
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 small onion, sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, cored and sliced
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1½ oz. uncured turkey pepperoni, halved
- 1½ cups shredded part-skim mozzarella or Italian cheese blend
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- chopped fresh basil (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Spread zucchini spirals over a clean kitchen towel. Sprinkle with salt; let sit 30 minutes. Squeeze towel to remove excess moisture from zucchini.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and ground beef; cook 5 minutes or until browned, stirring to crumble. Drain; return to skillet. Add marinara sauce, drained tomatoes, zucchini spirals, and pepper. Simmer 3 minutes or until warm throughout. Spoon mixture into a 13-by-9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray.

Heat oil in skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and bell pepper; saute 4 minutes or until beginning to turn tender. Add mushrooms, stirring to combine, and cook 2 minutes. Drain any excess liquid from skillet. Using slotted spoon, top zucchini mixture with sauteed vegetables and pepperoni. Sprinkle with cheeses.

Bake at 375 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until cheese is melted and beginning to brown on edges. Garnish with fresh basil, if desired.

CHEESY TACO CASSEROLE

Be Smart About Carbs

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

	cooking spray
6	corn tortillas
1 tsp.	salt
1¼ lbs.	lean ground beef (10% fat)
1	large onion, chopped (about 1½ cups)
2½ Tbsp.	lower-sodium taco seasoning
1 (14.5-oz.) can	can no-salt black beans, drained
1 (14.5-oz.) can	fire-roasted finely diced tomatoes
½ cup	fresh salsa
1 Tbsp.	lime juice
1½ cups	shredded Mexican blend cheese
¼ cup	chopped green onions
4 cups	chopped romaine lettuce

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Cut tortillas into ½- to 1-inch squares. Cover a sheet pan with foil; place cut tortillas on lined pan. Coat tortilla pieces with cooking spray; sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt, tossing to coat all pieces. Bake at 400 degrees for 12 minutes, stirring tortilla pieces every 3 to 4 minutes. (Tip: Watch pieces on edge to prevent excess browning.) Let cool.

Heat nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add ground beef and onion. Cook, stirring to crumble beef, 7 minutes or until beef is no longer pink. Drain any excess liquid; return meat mixture to skillet. Add taco seasoning, stirring well. Add beans, tomatoes, salsa and lime juice. Cook 1 to 2 minutes or until warm throughout and slightly thickened.

Sprinkle half of toasted tortilla pieces in the bottom of a 13-by-9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Top with half of beef mixture, ¼ cup cheese, and remaining tortilla pieces. Add remaining beef mixture and sprinkle remaining cheese over top. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until warm throughout and cheese is bubbly. Sprinkle with green onions. Let stand 5 minutes. Then cut into 8 pieces or spoon each serving over ½ cup chopped romaine lettuce.



ROASTED SWEET POTATO AND SAUSAGE BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

Reduce, Don't Eliminate

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

1 lb.	sweet potato, peeled and cut into ¾-inch cubes (about 3 to 3½ cups)
2 tsp.	olive oil
½ tsp.	kosher salt, divided
¼ tsp.	garlic powder
8 oz.	mild Italian turkey bulk sausage
1	onion, diced
4 cups	coarsely torn baby spinach
9	large eggs
¼ cup	1% or low-fat milk
½ cup	shredded sharp cheddar cheese
½ cup	grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Line a baking sheet with foil; lightly coat foil with cooking spray.

Toss sweet potatoes with olive oil, ¼ tsp. salt and garlic powder. Arrange over prepared baking sheet. Bake at 425 degrees for 20 minutes, stirring halfway during cooking. When potatoes are done, reduce heat to 375 degrees.

While potatoes bake, place a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add sausage, stirring to crumble, cooking 5 minutes or until no longer pink. Remove sausage from skillet to drain, reserving drippings in pan. Add onion to pan drippings. Cook 5 minutes, stirring frequently, or until tender. Add spinach, cooking 1 minute or just until wilted.

Combine eggs, milk, and remaining ¼ tsp. salt in a large bowl, whisking to combine. Add drained sausage, sweet potatoes, onions and spinach, and half of each cheese, stirring gently to combine. Lightly coat a 13-by-9-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Pour egg mixture into prepared dish. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Bake at 375 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until set in middle.



Want more healthy eating inspo? For more recipes and nutrition advice, check out RallyHealth.com/health-resources/food