

# Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

## Potato 101

Potatoes are a staple in many households. While potatoes may have a bad reputation, they're versatile (baked, mashed, fried, boiled) and nutrient rich. They are an excellent source of vitamin C and potassium.



Keeping an eye on your blood sugar? You can still enjoy potatoes. Compared to many vegetables, potatoes may raise blood sugar quickly. However, the effect on your blood sugar is influenced by the type of potato and cooking method. For example, a white potato can increase blood sugar more quickly than a sweet potato, while a boiled russet potato raises blood sugar more slowly than a baked russet potato.

It's also important to look at your entire meal versus just one food. When you enjoy potatoes with foods higher in protein and healthy fat, the potato is digested more slowly, which slows the rise of blood sugar.

### FUN FACT

*Don't store potatoes with apples. Apples and many other fruits produce ethylene gas, which promotes sprouting.*

### Sources:

[What Potatoes Have the Highest Glycemic Index?](#), nutritionletter.tufts.edu

[7 Health and Nutrition Benefits of Potatoes](#), healthline.com;

[Produce Basics - Potatoes](#), spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/cook/produce-basics/

## Loaded Potato Soup

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups

Serves: 4

### Ingredients:

- 4 medium potatoes (scrubbed, peeled, and cubed) (about 4 cups)
- 1 onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups low sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup nonfat milk
- 3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Optional: sliced green onions, crumbled bacon, diced ham, croutons, soup crackers



### Directions:

1. Combine potatoes, onion, garlic powder, ground black pepper, and broth in a large saucepan. Cover and cook over medium high heat until boiling.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Simmer until potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally (12–15 minutes).
3. Use a potato masher or fork to slightly mash the potatoes. This will also thicken the soup. There should still be pieces of potato in the soup.
4. Stir in the peas, milk, and shredded cheddar cheese. Cook and stir until the cheese is melted (3–4 minutes).
5. Add garnishes and serve right away.

### Nutrition information per serving:

340 calories, 8g total fat, 4.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 20mg cholesterol, 240mg sodium, 53g total carbohydrate, 7g fiber, 9g sugar, 16g protein

This information is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit [Spend Smart. Eat Smart.](#), spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu.



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## Food Safety Mythbusters

We all do our best to serve our families food that's safe and healthy. However, do you know all you should know? A few food safety practices that many people believe and follow are actually myths.

**Myth:** I don't need to wash fruits or vegetables if I'm going to peel them.

**Fact:** Because it's easy to transfer bacteria from the peel or rind when you're cutting to the inside of your fruits and veggies, it's important to wash all produce, even if you plan to peel it.

**Myth:** To get rid of any bacteria on my meat, poultry, or seafood, I should rinse off the juices with water first.

**Fact:** Rinsing meat, poultry, or seafood with water can increase your chance of foodborne illness by splashing juices and any bacteria they might contain onto your sink and counters. If you choose to rinse for cultural reasons, make sure to clean and disinfect the sink and counters immediately afterward.

**Myth:** It is OK to wash bagged greens if I want to. There's no harm!

**Fact:** Rinsing leafy greens that are ready to eat (those labeled "washed," "triple washed," or "ready to eat") will not enhance safety. In fact, it could increase the risk for cross-contamination. This means harmful bacteria from your hands or kitchen surfaces could find their way onto the greens while washing them.

**Source:** [Home Food Safety Mythbusters](http://HomeFoodSafetyMythbusters.fightbac.org), fightbac.org

## Encouragement Goes Far



We all can use encouragement at times, even some celebration when we meet a goal. Cheering on a friend or family member who wants to be more physically active is a wonderful way to show your support. Be open and listen—congratulate first steps and celebrate progress along the way. Help it happen—take a walk or explore new activities together. Don't push too hard and DO keep it positive.

**Source:** [How to Encourage Someone Toward Physical Fitness](http://HowtoEncourageSomeoneTowardPhysicalFitness.nextavenue.org), nextavenue.org