As part of the New Keep Well Campaign, Kilkenny County Council are teaming up with the Kilkenny Libraries, Healthy Ireland at your library and Healthy Kilkenny to bring you some important eating well tips and information. Jennifer Bay, Local Chef and Ellen Roche, Local Dietitian have recorded a cooking demonstration and provided some nutrition and tips for increasing Vitamin D and Protein in our diets. You will find the instructions and recipe below for Leek and Potato Soup.

**Jen’s Leek & Potato Soup**

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon of olive oil

1 leek – washed and diced

1 clove of garlic

2 tablespoons of red lentils

1 carrot – washed/peeled and diced

3 baby potatoes – washed/diced with skin on

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

Sprig of fresh thyme and handful of parsley

1 low salt stock cube

1 litre of water

Method:

1. Heat a large pot on the stove to medium/high heat.
2. Add the olive oil and allow to warm slightly
3. Then add the chopped leeks and sautee for a few minutes
4. With the side of your knife, press down on the garlic clove to break the skin. Remove it and place the garlic in the pot.
5. Stir everything to stop it sticking to the bottom of the pot, reduce the heat if it’s sticking.
6. Next add the chopped carrot and potatoes and stir. Allow to cook on a medium heat for about 5 minutes.
7. In the meantime, wash the lentils in a sieve until the water runs clear.
8. Add the lentils, fresh herbs, turmeric and stock cube to the pot and stir to combine.
9. Once the stock cube has melted and vegetables are beginning to soften, add the water.
10. Bring to the boil, place a lid on top and cook on medium heat for 15 to 20 minutes, until everything has softened. The lentils should puff up slightly and go quite pale in colour.
11. Using a stick blender, blend the soup to a smooth consistency and serve!

Tips:

* The longer you blend the soup, the creamier it will get.
* You don’t have to blend the soup, you could have a hearty vegetable stew instead.
* Once cooled, place it in the fridge. It will keep for 2 days.
* Dried herbs will work too – just use 1 teaspoon of dried mixed herbs!
* If you are freezing the soup, please use within one month

**Nutrition Information**

* Olive Oil: monounsaturated fats are part of a Mediterranean diet which is associated with cardio protective benefits. Monounsaturated fats can help improve cholesterol and blood pressure.
* Carrots: Vitamin A and Vitamin C are good for immune function
* Leeks and garlic: sources of prebiotics that help feed the beneficial bacteria in the intestines. The gut bacteria have important roles in producing the mood boosting serotonin hormone, they communicate with our immune system and also produce B-Vitamins for energy release.
* Lentils: great source of protein and fibre which is associated with steady releasing energy, which will make us feel full for longer. Fibre is also essential to maintain a regular bowel habit.
* Potatoes: are surprisingly a good source of vitamin C for normal functioning of the immune function. Where possibly, try to consume the skins on potatoes as the skins contain a lot of roughage which help us to meet the recommended 30g fibre per day.
* Turmeric: associated with reduced inflammation in the body
* Fresh and Dried Herbs: full of antioxidants and add an extra depth of flavour to meals
* Low-Salt stock cube: stock cubes are packed full of flavour however, 1 in 4 adults are sensitive to excessive salt which can elevate our blood pressure.

TIP: It is recommended that half our plates are made up of vegetables for our main meal. Ideally include a large bowl of homemade soup or plenty of salad. Try to snack on 1-2 portions of fruit daily which in combination will help us achieve the recommended 5-7 portions of fruit and veg per day for optimal health. Fresh food is usually best but frozen veg can be quite nutritious and tinned veg can be used as backup also. If using tinned fruit, opt for the natural juice instead of syrup versions

**Vitamin D**

* Vitamin D is essential for bone health and muscle mass and normal immune function. Vitamin D can be found in eggs and oily fish but it is recommended to take a Vitamin D supplement to help achieve the recommended amount. Vitamin D dosage for older adults is 10ug daily and 15ug for adults who are housebound or immobile. If you have a health condition e.g. kidney disease then you need to consult with your doctor before taking supplements or amending your diet. Tip: For optimum Vitamin D absorption, take the supplement with a meal that includes fat e.g. dinner time.

**Tips for Increasing Protein**

Protein is essential for maintaining muscle mass in older adults and it also help slow the rate of muscle mass loss as we age. It is recommended to include protein with each meal. This can be done easily by adding ingredients like; lentils, chickpeas, butterbeans, baked beans, eggs, dairy, fish or lean meat.

**Signposts for Healthy Eating tips and information:**

Healthy Ireland: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/healthy-ireland/>

Safefood: <https://www.safefood.net/campaigns/start>

Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute: <https://www.indi.ie/>

Check out these Healthy & Easy Recipes: <https://www.safefood.net/101-square-meals-cookbook>

Local library branches and Healthy Ireland at Your Library: <https://www.kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/our_services/healthy-ireland/>

The Healthy Ireland at your Library initiative provides for a core book collection in each of our 8 Kilkenny County Library branches, as well as events & workshops, online resources (including eBooks, eAudiobooks) and health information service. If you have any queries about this initiative, please contact the Healthy Ireland at your Library co-ordinator on 056 7794461.

‘This KEEP WELL campaign is brought to you with thanks to Healthy Ireland an initiative of the Government of Ireland with funding from the Healthy Ireland Fund and the Sláintecare fund delivered by Pobal’