Vegetables are in plentiful supply right now with everything from asparagus to zucchini available in the grocery store, farmers market or in your garden.

Vegetables are nutrient powerhouses with fiber, folate, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C and iron. Sometimes the methods we use to prepare these veggies can compromise the nutrients or add unacceptable amounts of fat to the mix. Today let’s talk about preparing vegetables in a new way that your family will love.

Most of us love potato chips. Those fried bits of thinly sliced potatoes are certainly tasty but not so nutritious. The average American eats over six pounds of potato chips each year at a cost of almost 15,000 calories. So what if you could decrease the fat, increase the vitamin C and still keep that wonderful chip flavor? You can, by choosing different root vegetables to make your chips.

Choosing to make your own chips will save you lots of money as well. A bag of potato chips can cost $3. But you can make the same number of chips for less than a dollar.

Besides the standard potato, consider carrots, beets or sweet potatoes for your chips. Slice them thin, brush with oil, season carefully and roast them for an excellent addition to family meals. These are every bit as good as commercial chips but without all the added fat.

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Slice vegetables thinly. Shave carrots lengthwise into thin strips using a vegetable peeler. Sweet potatoes or white potatoes can be sliced thin using a mandolin. Make sure the vegetables are no more than one-sixteenth of an inch thick (about the thickness of a quarter). Place vegetables in a bowl and sprinkle oil over the top. Add salt, pepper, garlic, paprika or other favorite seasonings. Toss with your hands until thoroughly coated. Place in a single layer on baking sheets and bake for 8 to 12 minutes depending on the size of the pieces, until
golden brown. Let chips cool for about 3 minutes. Store in an airtight container for up to five days—but they won’t last that long.

I love kale chips. This highly nutritious leafy green makes great tasting chips. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and tear leaves off the tough stems and into bite-sized pieces. Spread on cookie sheets. Drizzle with oil and gently massage oil to cover the surfaces with your hands. Or use a healthy dose of spray-on cooking spray. Sprinkle with Parmesan, salt, garlic or nutritional yeast. Bake for about eight to 10 minutes or until the edges are crispy and brown. Again, pack in an airtight container.

Some chips can be made in the dehydrator. Take some of that overload of zucchini and use it to create dried chips.

Slice zucchini thin and spread on dehydrator trays. Sprinkle the chips with salt. You can also brush zucchini with oil, but I find that they are just as tasty without this addition. Dry at 120 degrees until crisp, usually about 12 hours or overnight. After cooling, pack into an airtight container.

Chips are tasty additions to your meals. Save money and cut out that extra fat and calories by making your chips at home.

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