

Lora's Story – Chili? For Breakfast?

From the very first Suppers meeting I attended, I've made it a point of relaying the information I learned to my husband and two kids. I especially wanted to make them understand that a lot of the processed foods are very unhealthy and addictive. At our meeting we had reviewed a book that describes how sugar affects people's brains, so I was impressing on them how "drug like" junk food is. After about the fifth meeting, my 7-year old daughter, Katie, decided to confide in me about how she was feeling in school. She said that she would secretly eat some of her snack before lunch because she felt very hungry and she had a headache. She also felt guilty about doing this. Katie's schedule is as follows: She gets picked up by the bus at 8:30 am, has lunch at 11:15, and snack is at 2:30 pm.

I read about the breakfast challenge and decided to try it on Katie and my 5 year old daughter, Sarah. The timing was perfect; my 7-year old was already giving me important feedback that matched what we were learning at the program. I told Katie that we were eating food for breakfast that couldn't carry us all the way until lunch time. I asked her if she would participate in an experiment to test different breakfasts and see if we feel well all morning. I told both my kids that we'd start with turkey chili for a few days and see how we feel. Since they both like the chili, they both said okay. The first day of the breakfast challenge was Saturday. I thought Saturday was a good day to try the breakfast challenge because they had a 45-minute swimming lesson before lunch. If they could stay satiated until lunch then I knew that the chili was a good breakfast for them. We ate the chili at 9:00 and they still felt okay by 12:00. We ate chili on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Each day I would ask Katie if she was hungry before lunch or if she had a headache. Each day she would say that she felt good, no headache, and she didn't have to eat some of her snack before lunch. We never even tried the other options on the Suppers breakfast challenge, we hit it right on the first day. My children just don't do well on cereal at the beginning of the day. They need a meal.

We were really lucky to have such a good experience with our first observation. The next thing I plan to tackle is healthier snacks. This will be a different kind of challenge because my kids spend a lot of time at their cousins, and they have terrible eating habits. They're also unruly. So far the girls have managed to stick with the fruit and veggies I provide even when their cousins are having chips and cookies. I'm so glad we made these changes while they are still young enough for me to influence!

I'm very grateful for what I'm learning at the Suppers program. Without this knowledge, I would not have been able to educate my family and Katie would not have thought to tell me about her headaches at school.

Recipe – Breakfast Chili

Turkey Chili - Easy Version

Place enough olive oil in a soup pot to coat the bottom

On medium heat, brown 1½ pounds of ground turkey

Add two cans of drained kidney or preferred beans

Add one small jar of salsa and one small jar of tomato sauce after reading the labels to make sure there is no form of sugar or corn syrup in them

Depending on the amount of liquid in the salsa, you may need a little water

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Add a tablespoon of chili powder, or to taste

Add salt to taste, if it is not restricted for you

Let it simmer til the water steams off and it is the consistency you like, about ½ hour

Turkey Chili – Regular Version

Soak one pound of dry beans overnight and cook according to packages directions the next day

Place enough olive oil in a soup pot to coat the bottom

On medium heat, brown 1½ pounds of ground turkey

Combine the meat and drained beans including just a little bean water

Add one small jar of salsa and one small jar of tomato sauce after reading the labels to make sure there is no form of sugar or corn syrup in them

Chop any combination of onions, peppers, carrots, green beans to make 2 - 4 cups and add to the chili

Add ½ cup to one cup of water during the cooking if it seems too dry for your taste

Add a tablespoon of chili powder, or to taste

Add salt to taste, if it is not restricted for you

Let it simmer til the water steams off and it is the consistency you like, about ½ hour