

refrigerator redux

IN THE "BEFORE" FRIDGE



When a Curves member asked for help to improve her eating habits, we sent in a leading nutritionist to examine her refrigerator. *by karen cicero*

On a sunny Thursday in Acton, Massachusetts, Linda Bockskopf is doing some cleaning when the doorbell rings. She greets a crew from *diane*, along with Liz Weiss, MS, RD, a dietitian and coauthor of *The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers*.

They didn't show up out of the blue, mind you. Weeks ago, Bockskopf registered at the Curves in Lexington for the chance to have a makeover—not of herself, but of her refrigerator. Her plea was compelling: "My weight is creeping up, my blood pressure is on the rise, my cholesterol is over 200," says the married 41-year-old meeting and event planner, who works from home. "I need to eat better before things get completely out of hand."

Bockskopf quickly shows Weiss to her fridge, which is surprisingly empty. The produce compartment only has eight peaches and two entire shelves are almost bare. "I tend to buy food as I go," says Bockskopf, who also confesses that she has a drawerful of take-out menus.

"Let's see the freezer," requests Weiss. Inside, she finds several Trader Joe's frozen rice bowls and boxes of ice cream sandwiches, frozen yogurt, and freezer pops.

Weiss's initial assessment: "Bockskopf has too much frozen convenience food and not enough convenience ingredients—like fresh and frozen vegetables and fresh chicken or fish to make healthy meals. Plus, there's no excuse for all those sugary treats, especially because there aren't lots of kids in the house."

So how did she take Bockskopf's refrigerator out of the ice age? On the following pages, read Weiss's notes on what she axed and what she added—and why.

WHOLE FOODS ORGANIC ROASTED VEGETABLE AND GOAT CHEESE PIZZA
For a frozen pizza, this one is fairly healthy. But Bockskopf treats it as a personal pie rather than one meant for three people. As a result, she polishes off 810 calories and 21 grams (g) of fat in one sitting. A better solution: Split half with hubby and make a quick salad using ready-to-eat veggies.

LIGHT CREAM CHEESE
Here's where you want to opt for the fat-free version: You eliminate 3 g of unhealthy fat and gain 50 milligrams (mg) of calcium per serving.

DIETZ & WATSON DELI HAM
A paltry 2-ounce portion of this ham packs about one-fourth of Bockskopf's sodium limits for the entire day. A better option: Wellshire Farms Sunday Breakfast Ham at just 180 mg of sodium per serving or Dietz & Watson Gourmet Lite Turkey Breast at 55 mg of sodium per serving.

SKIPPY REDUCED FAT CREAMY PEANUT BUTTER
Get rid of this relic from the low-fat craze and buy the regular version. It has the same amount of calories as the reduced-fat variety and less sugar and salt! What about the small fat savings? Who cares—the fat in peanut butter is the healthy kind.

10 MARS M-AZING CHOCOLATE BARS
Trade a bar for a piece of chewy caramel candy and you'll save more than 200 calories.

ICE CREAM SANDWICHES, FROZEN YOGURT, AND FREEZER POPS
While Bockskopf maintains these belong to her husband—and she only eats one sandwich per week—a large variety of foods within the same category encourages overdoing it; in fact, a recent study found people who successfully maintained weight loss limited choices in their snacks—except for fruits and veggies. Keep one kind and toss the rest.

ROLLS
Made with white flour, these sub rolls are sinking otherwise healthy grain choices. Swap them for fiber-rich whole-wheat hamburger buns, which tend to keep you fuller longer.

1 STICK UNSALTED BUTTER
Surprise: Keep it! While it's far from a healthy fat, using a teeny amount on vegetables or a whole-grain roll makes the meal more satisfying.

2 GALLONS FAT-FREE MILK
While fat-free milk is a super beverage choice, you shouldn't go overboard because it isn't calorie free. A recent Harvard University study on adolescents found that those who exceeded the recommended amount of milk were more likely to become overweight than those who stayed within the limits of three cups daily.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY FURNALD/GRAY

IN THE "AFTER" FRIDGE

EDAMAME IN SHELLS

Bockskopf's diet doesn't include soy products. A serving of edamame provides heart-healthy soy protein plus iron, vitamin C, and vitamin A. Buy the version in shells because it's more fun to pop out the beans.

CHICKEN BREASTS

Instead of high-sodium frozen meals, Bockskopf can pull out these individually packed chicken breasts when she can't get to the grocery store for fresh ingredients.

MIDDLE EARTH ORGANICS ORGANIC TOMATO & EGGPLANT PASTA SAUCE

This delicious brand has three times the vitamin C and one-seventh the sodium of the Aunt Millie's marinara sauce that Bockskopf usually buys.

WALNUTS

While Bockskopf stocked several different kinds of nuts in her fridge, she didn't have any walnuts—the type that contains a significant amount of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

ROTISSERIE CHICKEN

Most of the salt and the bad fat in rotisserie chicken are in the skin. Once that's gone, the dark and white meat are excellent in sandwiches, salads, or with a vegetable side dish.

psst...

See what else Weiss did to make the fridge (and Bockskopf) healthier by going to her Web site, www.meal-makeovermoms.com.

ORANGES, APPLES, AND PEARS

While every variety of fresh fruit is healthy, Bockskopf is better off with harder types that won't turn to mush in the fridge after a few days.

BABY CARROTS, BAGGED GREENS, BAGGED BROCCOLI

Since Bockskopf doesn't spend a lot of time cooking, ready-to-eat bags of veggies are essential. And studies indicate that they contain the same amount of nutrients as their less-convenient counterparts.

WYMAN'S WILD BLUEBERRIES

Cup for cup, these "baby" blueberries boast about 50% more antioxidants than their cultivated cousins, which are already teaming with these disease-fighting compounds. Use them for smoothies and stir into pancakes or oatmeal.

OMEGA-3 EGGS

Bockskopf nixes eggs because they are high in cholesterol. But Harvard University researchers have found that eating up to one egg daily doesn't raise heart disease risk in healthy people. While regular eggs would be fine for her, try omega-3 eggs for extra heart-healthy fatty acids plus more vitamin E and slightly less cholesterol.

WATER

Bockskopf keeps bottled water in her basement, but research from the University of Illinois shows that you're much more likely to consume something if it's nearby (as in the front of the fridge).

WILD SALMON

Reel in wild salmon for omega-3 fatty acids without high levels of the contaminants found in other kinds of salmon.

SMART SHOPPING

Judging from how sparse Linda Bockskopf's fridge was, you'd think she barely went to the supermarket. But truth is, she was there nearly every day. Nutritionist Liz Weiss, RD, suggests she cut her trips to twice a week and shop more efficiently. Here's how:

PLAN THREE DINNERS

While it's difficult to make a commitment to what you're going to eat for the next seven days, figuring out three isn't tough. Then write down the ingredients you need on a shopping list.

HAVE AN EMERGENCY STASH

Working late one night and don't have the time (or energy) to stop at the store? Or is the weather too bad to venture out? Purchase a few bags of frozen vegetables, a box of veggie burgers, and a pound of thinly sliced chicken for days when you're in a pinch.

SHOP ALONE

If you bring along your children or even your husband, you're more likely to buy junk. If you can't leave the kids at home, tell them you will allow them to pick one item—but it has to be from the produce aisle.

USE VARIETY TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Studies show that variety encourages you to eat more. So don't purchase three kinds of cookies or four kinds of crackers, but do buy a wide range of fruits and vegetables.

BYPASS BULK FOODS

Researchers at the University of Illinois found that you eat more at one sitting from large containers than you do from smaller ones. So don't buy the mega size unless you plan to parcel it out first. 