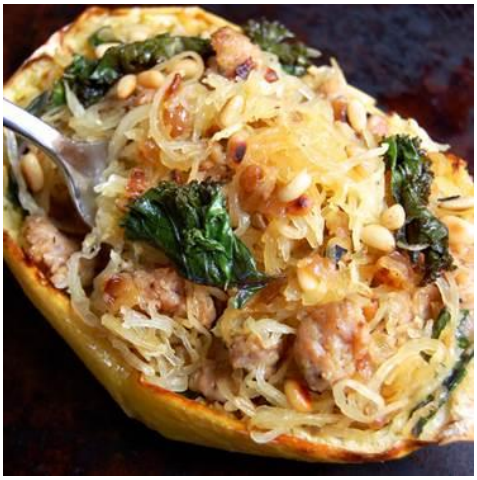
Sausage, Kale, and Spaghetti Squash- This simple, tasty meal contains a healthy balance of carbs, protein and fat. It can be served in a casserole dish or right in the spaghetti squash shell for a fun twist!



Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 medium spaghetti squash
- 1 lb. of chicken sausage or turkey sausage
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bunch kale
- 3 T. olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- Salt and pepper
- 2 T. pine nuts, roast (optional)
- 2 T. fresh parsley, chopped (optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place squash in the microwave for 3-4 minutes to soften. Using a sharp knife, cut the squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out the seeds and discard. Place the halves, with the cut side up, on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for 40-50 minutes, until you can poke the squash easily with a fork. Let cool until you can handle it safely.
2. Meanwhile, prepare the kale by removing the center stems and either tearing or cutting up the leaves. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 4-5 minutes. Add the chicken sausage and break apart with a spatula to crumble. Cook for 10-12 minutes, stirring regularly, until the sausage is browned and cooked through. Add the kale and stir. Cook for a few minutes more to wilt the kale. Remove from heat and set aside.
3. Once cooled, scrape the insides of the spaghetti squash with a fork to shred the squash into strands. Transfer the strands into the skillet with the sausage and toss to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide the mixture among the squash shells, and top with pine nuts and parsley if desired.

Nutrition Info Per Serving: 272 Calories, 28g Protein, 11.8g Fat, 10g Carbohydrate, 104mg Cholesterol

The three major nutrients in our diet, or what are called macronutrients, are carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Carbohydrates play a major role in dietary management of diabetes, but did you know that protein and fat are also important nutrients for blood glucose management? Understanding the role of these energy sources can help you make better food choices that can improve your glucose control and possibly even enhance your enjoyment of your diet.

Dietary protein contributes to many key body functions such as blood clotting, fluid balance, production of hormones and enzymes, vision, and cell repair. Eating lower-fat protein-based foods, such as eggs whites, low-fat cottage cheese and white meat fish or poultry with carbohydrates at meals allows you to eat more food without any great effect on your blood glucose. Also, protein-based foods take longer to digest than carbohydrates and may help slow the rise in blood glucose after eating. Most healthy adults should aim for a protein intake of 15 to 20% of their total daily calories. For example, on an 1,800 calorie diet, one should take in between 68 to 90 grams of protein daily.

Fat has many useful roles in the body as well, including supplying essential fatty acids and helps us absorb fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K. Unused calories from carbohydrates and protein are stored as fat in order to provide a ready supply of fuel when energy needs are increased, such as during exercise. We should aim for no more than 35% of our total daily calories from fat. For example, if you are following an 1,800 calorie diet, you should take in 70 grams or less of fat daily. Dietary fat doesn't directly raise blood glucose levels the same way carbohydrates do, however, eating large amounts of fat can make it harder for your own insulin, injected insulin or even your diabetes pills to do their job. For example if you have two meals containing the same amount of carbohydrates, but one meal contains 12 grams of fat and the other contains 50 grams of fat, the latter is likely to require more insulin, whether that insulin comes from your body or from an injection. Eating large amounts of fat can also prolong the time blood glucose levels will remain high after a meal. Many people find that their blood glucose is still high in the morning when they eat a high-fat meal for dinner. On the other hand, eating small amounts of healthy fat can be helpful. When combined with carbohydrates, for example, a tablespoon of peanut butter on whole grain bread, can keep glucose levels from spiking by lowering the glycemic index of carbohydrates.

Eating healthy is all about balance. The next time you sit down to dinner, remember to include all three nutrients on your plate to help ensure healthy blood glucose levels.