How to Grill like a Smart Life Pro

In summertime, everyone loves easy grilling as a way to enjoy the season with friends and family. Here are a few Smart Life tips and recipes to help you keep up your healthy habits and still enjoy the fun and flavors of a barbecue.

1. Start with Choosing High Quality Protein: Start by making a smart choice at the market. Look for sustainably raised meats, ideally 100% grass-fed or grass-finished beef and organic chicken. By choosing high quality meat you avoid added hormones and antibiotics. Furthermore, animals who are raised in their natural environment and allowed to roam on pasture are the healthiest, and hence the healthiest to consume. When it comes to fish and seafood choose sustainable wild-caught fish like cod or Alaskan salmon, which are high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Avoid fish with higher concentrations of mercury, like tuna and swordfish. Shop savvy with fish-buying guides like the **Monterey Bay Aquarium**.

2. Grill Smart. A little sear on meat can be delicious, but too much char can be dangerous. Using very high-heat cooking can cause the formation of HCAs (heterocyclic amines), chemicals that have been related to higher risk of some cancers. To avoid the formation of these chemicals, either start by cooking the meat in the oven and finish on the grill, or cook it to medium rare over moderate flame. Choosing smaller cuts and making kebabs instead of selecting larger cuts keeps grilling time shorter, too. Another way to keep HCAs away is to use marinates. Brushing on a thin layer of marinate or marinating meats ahead of cooking, and using acidic marinades with lemon juice or apple cider vinegar can be helpful in avoiding charring. It’s best to use a low- or no-sugar marinade to avoid charring. Another way to reduce exposure is to use a rack or cedar plank on the grill; wild

salmon is especially tasty prepared this way.

3. Choose Easy and Smart Sides: Instead of energy-sapping fries, potato or macaroni salad, opt for lots of greens and other fresh vegetables. Lightly grill some eggplant, asparagus, zucchini or summer squash slices by tossing these veggies in a bowl with a little EVOO, sea salt, fresh pepper and vegetable broth an fresh herbs. Salads and slaws are also easy to prep ahead. Veggies, raw or grilled, make the perfect accompaniments to grilled proteins and they fill you up with nutrients and fiber that help you cut down on your protein portion sizes.

4. Slow down, be social and have fun. It is ok to relax and enjoy a summer barbecue. If you slow down, enjoy the company of your friends and family and make the gathering not just about the food, you will make the best choices. But if you end up eating or drinking a little too much or tasting an amazing dessert you would normally skip, simply savor it, and move on. No guilt! The next day go back to your healthier Smart Life choices and maybe join us for the 3-Day Smart Life Soup Cleanse to help reboot after the July 4th barbecue parties.