

"I do really enjoy being in the kitchen and trying things," says Sally Kuzemchak, in the kitchen of her Clintonville home



Getting Real



Sally Kuzemchak of Real Mom Nutrition talks food, family and fun—and shares three recipes for moms on the go

Story by HEATHER WEEKLEY • Photos by WILL SHILLING

When Sally Kuzemchak became a mom, she realized that maintaining healthy eating habits for both herself and her kids wasn't exactly a walk in the park.

"I went online, and I felt like everyone sort of painted this rosy picture of what it was like," says Kuzemchak, mother to boys Henry, 10, and Sam, 6. "I felt like it was a lot harder than this, and no one was telling the truth."

So Kuzemchak, a 42-year-old registered dietician and freelance writer who lives in Clintonville, created Real Mom Nutrition, a blog where she dishes up recipes and explores hot-button food topics while keeping things light with her sense of humor.

Kuzemchak started her career in journalism, writing first for *Country Living* and then for *Self*, covering nutrition. She fell in love with the topic, and after an editor mentioned that dieticians who could write were a rarity, Kuzemchak set out to become one herself. It took seven years (she married Joel Husenits and had her first child during the journey), but Kuzemchak became a registered dietician through Ohio State in 2004 and earned her master's degree in dietetics two years later.

She now writes regularly for national publications like *Parents* and *Fitness*, teaches nutrition to nursing students at Otterbein University and blogs several times weekly on Real Mom Nutrition.

"I provide information, advice and strategies that worked for me, and hope that maybe they might work for my readers," Kuzemchak says. "I really want it to be a place where my reader

feels understood and doesn't feel shamed or judged. It's just a place where you can get advice but also feel real."

Along with recipes and musings on Real Mom Nutrition, Kuzemchak also is a strong supporter of what she calls Snactivism—a movement she started to change the snack culture. When her sons began playing sports, she noticed they were getting junk food like cookies and cupcakes after practices and games.

"I advocate for just fruit and water on the fields, or no snacks at all," Kuzemchak says. "Let's return to the orange slices that were cut up and on the fields when we were kids. So on my blog, I have resources for parents, for their own [sports] teams. There's sample emails to parents, sample emails to coaches, snack lists and even FAQs."

One of Kuzemchak's most recent ventures is a cookbook, *Cooking Light Dinnertime Survival Guide*, which was released last spring. The editors at *Cooking Light* liked the tone and style of Real Mom Nutrition, so Kuzemchak collaborated with the magazine to create a cookbook for busy parents. It is a combination of her recipes, recipes adapted from bloggers she knows and recipes from the *Cooking Light* archive.

Chock full of bright designs and colorful pictures, Kuzemchak hopes that people find inspiration inside.

"A lot of people just tell me it is fun to read," Kuzemchak says. "It makes people laugh, or it gives them a good idea. I'm really proud of that."



Kale and Apple Salad

Serves 6

Ingredients

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 6 cups loosely packed, chopped kale
- 1 apple, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- Parmigiano-Reggiano or other hard cheese

Directions

- Combine the first four ingredients in a large bowl, stirring well with a whisk.
- Add remaining ingredients, tossing to coat. Grate fresh cheese on top to taste.
- Serve immediately, or cover and store in refrigerator up to 2 days.

Try these recipes from Sally & find a bonus recipe at Capital-Style.com

O & A

Sally Kuzemchak

* WHAT OTHER BLOGS INSPIRE YOU?

I read a lot of blogs about nutrition, especially those written by fellow dietitians. I always get great recipes and tips from TheKitchn.com [whose executive editor lives in Columbus]. And watching hair tutorials on the TheSmallThingsBlog.com is hands-down my favorite way to procrastinate.

* WHAT ARE SOME FAVORITE SPOTS TO EAT WITH YOUR FAMILY?

We really love Clintonville, and we love staying in our neighborhood. We love Harvest Pizza. I love Northstar. That's one of my favorite spots for breakfast or lunch. We really like Mozart's. I just went to The Crest for the first time, but I haven't brought my husband and kids yet. I also like Lavash a lot. Their hummus is really yummy. We just don't go out very much. My kids are getting a little bit older where they can actually sit in a restaurant and do better.



Sally with sons Henry, left, and Sam, right

* HOW DO YOU STAY ACTIVE?

I take classes at the rec center a couple times a week—it's a strength training class. I walk my kids to and from school every day. We live just a couple blocks from school, so having that walk every day is quite nice. I really like the Seven Minute Workout, from *The New York Times*. I have that app on my iPad. I realized about a year ago that I hate waking up early. I've just decided to honor that. I know that would be the best time for me to exercise, but I just hate it so much that I have decided to embrace that and try to do other things.

* HOW DO YOU TREAT YOURSELF?

I have wonderful friends, and I love getting together with them for lunch, or sometimes we go for a walk. And I do

really enjoy being in the kitchen and trying things. I'm really big on, "Wow, there's a recipe for homemade Pop-Tarts? I'm going to try that." I just want to see if that will work. Or I wonder if I can make my own tortillas. I don't just do that for the blog. I really enjoy seeing something and seeing if I can do it myself.

* HOW DO YOU UNWIND AT DAY'S END?

That is hard because I work most evenings. When you have a blog and you have social media channels, work never ends. It's not a job that ends at 5, and you can't ever really turn it off or turn your brain off. So I do work most evenings. But an indulgence is to watch an episode of a show on Netflix or Amazon. My husband and I sit together every night and talk about our days and have some quiet time together. That's

important to stay connected.

* WHAT'S YOUR KEY TO HAPPINESS?

I surround myself with people who I love and people who are kind and good to me. I nurture those friendships and relationships. I try to stay good to my body, meaning I try to feed it foods that make me feel good. I know if I start my day with a donut, I will feel awful and I will be grouchy. I will not be happy. But if I start my day with a green smoothie, I will feel energetic and in a good mood.

* HOW CAN PEOPLE KEEP THEIR HEALTHY RESOLUTIONS ON TRACK?

As a dietician, we always tell people to go very small on their goals. Even if you think your goal is small, go smaller. It's wonderful to conquer that goal, and then once you do, you can build on it.



Four Ingredient Peanut Butter Cookies

Makes about 16

Ingredients

- 1 cup natural peanut butter
- 1 egg
- ½ cup oats
- ½ cup sugar

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Mix all ingredients in a medium bowl.
- Roll into 1-inch balls or drop by rounded teaspoons onto ungreased cookie sheet.
- Press the tops of the cookies with the back of a fork (dipped in sugar) to make a crisscross design.
- Bake about 10 to 12 minutes or just until the tops start to look dry.
- Cool 1 to 2 minutes, then remove from baking sheet and place on cooling rack.

Connect with Sally



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