

Enjoy Holiday Foods!

Worried enjoying a traditional holiday meal and party foods with family and friends will destroy healthful food habits nurtured all year? On average, Americans gain approximately one to two pounds during the holiday season. While this weight gain isn't dramatic, research shows it tends to stick and accumulate over the years. The good news is any foods, even beloved holiday dishes, can fit into a healthful eating plan with practice and planning.



In preparation for a big holiday party or feast, do not skip meals throughout the day. This can result in overeating later. It is especially important to eat breakfast, as research shows that those who eat this morning meal tend to consume fewer calories throughout the day. High-fiber foods will satisfy hunger but are lower in calories, so include fruits, vegetables and whole grains in your meals.

As the holidays approach, parties become numerous along with the challenge of keeping your commitment to healthful eating. If you are hosting a gathering this holiday season you can reduce fat and calories without sacrificing taste by swapping out a few ingredients in your favorite recipes.

- Using two egg whites in place of one egg can reduce the cholesterol and produce the same tasty result.
- Use low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth in your mashed potatoes to add flavor and cut back on added butter or margarine.
- Substitute applesauce for oil, margarine or butter in muffins and quick breads like banana bread. Try substituting a small amount at first, as the more you substitute the more the texture of the finished product changes.
- For dips, sauces and pie toppings, use fat-free yogurt, sour cream and whipped topping.
- Sliced almonds make a delicious, crunchy topping in place of fried onion rings.
- Choose reduced-fat or low-fat cheeses for salads and casseroles.

Balance "party calories" with more physical activity. Even though it may be cold outside, these everyday activities can take only 10 minutes at a time, and will help you get moving during the holidays.

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- Play actively with your kids, grandkids or pets.
- After dinner, take a walk with your family — even if it's just around the block.

For great recipes to try this holiday season, visit: <http://snap.nal.usda.gov/nutrition-through-seasons/healthy-thrifty-holiday-menus>

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics www.eatright.org