



## Eating Tips for a Healthy Holiday Season

Food is an important part of many holidays. Many people gain a little (or a lot of) weight between Thanksgiving and the New Year. What's to blame? Maybe it is all of the tempting treats available during the holiday season. It is not necessary to avoid holiday festivities in an attempt to maintain your weight. Consider the following tips for enjoying the holiday season without gaining weight.

- ❁ Focus on weight maintenance instead of weight loss during the holidays. If you are currently overweight and want to lose weight, this is not the time to do so. Maintenance of your present weight is a big enough challenge during the holiday season.
- ❁ Be physically active every day. Physical activity, especially aerobic activities (walking, jogging, bicycling, and swimming) can help relieve stress, regulate appetite, and burn up extra calories from holiday eating.
- ❁ Eat a light snack before going to holiday parties. It is not a good idea to arrive at a party starved. Not only are you more likely to overeat, but you are also less likely to resist the temptation of eating the higher fat and higher calorie foods. Try eating a piece of fruit, a small carton of yogurt, or a string of cheese before you go.
- ❁ Make a plan. Think about where you will be, who you will be with, what foods will be available, what foods are really special to you vs. those that you can do without. It is much easier to deal with a difficult social eating situation if you've already planned it out.
- ❁ Reduce the fat in holiday recipes. There are plenty of low fat and low calorie substitutes that are tasty. Try using applesauce in place of oil in your favorite holiday breads; use egg substitutes in place of whole eggs; try plain nonfat yogurt in place of sour cream.
- ❁ Take steps to avoid recreational eating. At parties and holiday dinners, we tend to eat beyond our body's physical hunger simply because food is there and eating is a social thing. To avoid recreational eating, make one plate of food you really want. Eat it slowly. When you are done, pop a mint or stick of gum in your mouth, get a tall glass of water and sip on it throughout the night, or position yourself away from the buffet table or food trays to keep yourself from over eating.

Enjoy good friends and family. Although food can be a big part of the season, it doesn't have to be the focus. Holidays are a time to reunite with good friends and family to share laughter and cheer, to celebrate and give thanks.





## Lowering the Fat in Holiday Treats

### Eggnog:

- 🌸 Use mostly egg whites or egg substitute instead of whole eggs.
- 🌸 Use fat-free half and half or evaporated fat-free milk instead of whole milk counterparts.
- 🌸 Substitute rum extract for the alcohol if you want the taste without the effect.

### Cakes, Bars, Muffins:

- 🌸 Use heart-healthy canola oil instead of butter, or use applesauce or mashed bananas if you want to cut the fat completely. Other fruit purees will work too.
- 🌸 Substitute egg whites for whole eggs in cakes and quick breads.
- 🌸 Use cocoa powder instead of chocolate in your baked goods to add rich chocolate flavor without the fat, or use smaller quantities of miniature chocolate chips instead of the regular versions.

### Holiday Appetizers:

- 🌸 Substitute low-fat or fat-free versions of mayonnaise, yogurt and sour cream to make dips.
- 🌸 Serve plenty of raw vegetables to accompany your dips.
- 🌸 Make a fresh salsa and serve with home-baked tortilla chips.
- 🌸 Use fat-free cream cheese and lean cuts of turkey or ham in pinwheels or roll-ups.
- 🌸 In soups, use fat-free and low sodium broths as your base. Use pureed root vegetables or beans to thicken them instead of cream.

### Holiday Dinner:

- 🌸 Serve lean cuts of meat, such as pork or beef tenderloin. If a ham is your centerpiece, be sure to trim the fat. If using turkey, remove the skin and choose white meat over dark meat if you can.
- 🌸 Provide plenty of vegetables. Steam, braise or roast them. Glaze with a very small amount of butter if you like, or use broth and herbs for flavor instead.

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