

Healthy Eating Tip of December 2011: Healthy Holiday Eating



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The holidays are coming up and while most people set out with the best of intentions, according to a prospective study on holiday weight gain, Americans gain more weight during the holiday months (mid-November to mid-January) than before or after the holidays. Making drastic lifestyle or eating changes may not be ideal right before or during the holidays, but you surely don't want to gain weight in the meantime! Patient Food and Nutrition Services in The University of Michigan Health System are here to help with practical health advice! In the following sections you will find useful tips and suggestions for avoiding the dreaded holiday weight gain.

Holiday Meals Without the Guilt

- Only purchase food items you intend to eat. Don't fill your pantry with holiday treats long before the holidays; it is better to avoid the temptation.
- Allow yourself to enjoy your favorite holiday foods on the holiday. Avoid choosing foods that are high in calories and fat on days between Thanksgiving and New Year's. This way your new year's resolutions list will be made simpler.
- Eat your favorite foods, but don't overeat. Look at all the food and choose foods you really want, while maintaining reasonable portions. Sometimes a small taste can satisfy your craving.
- Balance your calorie intake. Enjoy holiday meals and eat smaller, lower calorie meals throughout the rest of the day. Eat smaller portions of high calorie foods.
- Eat slowly and stop when you are full. Taking your time to chew and taste each bite gives your body more time to recognize when it is full.
- Eat only when you are hungry. With all of the food around, it is easy to munch even when you aren't hungry. Sitting away from food and keeping busy with a conversation or game can help.
- Share the holiday spirit – and your food. Save calories by splitting treats with another person.
- Don't go to dinner on an empty stomach. Eat a small snack before the dinner or party to avoid overeating while you are there. Plan ahead and decide what food you will eat while you are there.



Tips for a Healthy Holiday Season

Enjoying the holiday season means more than just enjoying food! It is a time to celebrate, give thanks, and spend quality time with friends and family. Quality time does not have to be spent sitting around a dinner table. There's no need to exclude your favorite holiday foods, but knowing when to stop eating is important. Small cuts in calories here and there can make a big difference throughout the holiday season.



Remember to stay active during the holidays. Exercise is a great way to get rid of the “Holiday Blues,” manage stress, and burn calories. Plan non-food gatherings like bowling or walking around the mall. Going for a walk after a holiday meal can help burn some extra calories. Here are some fun ways to stay active in the winter months:

- Walking to see festive lights**
- Ice skating**
- Snowball fights**
- Shoveling snow**
- Skiing**
- Building snowmen**
- Snowboarding**
- Sledding**



Hectic Holiday Advice

It's not necessary to avoid holiday gatherings altogether to maintain a healthy weight, but there are some not-so-secret ways to avoid overeating. Plan ahead before heading out to parties or gatherings. Eat a simple, healthy snack before leaving. Bring along a healthy dish when invited to a party or dinner so you'll have at least one healthy food option.



- On hectic days, try to avoid fast food. Stock your kitchen with easy, healthy meals and snacks: fresh fruits, sandwich fixings, pre-cut fresh vegetables, low fat soups, whole grain breads and cereals.
- Try your best to stay active and keep up your exercise program.
- Allow enough time for sleep and relaxation. Being overstressed and running on little sleep makes it hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Plan non-food get-togethers, such as ice skating, to promote fun, festive ways to keep fit.

How to Handle Holiday Parties

Prior to the Party or Meal

- Don't "conserve" calories the day of the event. Eat regularly to avoid extreme hunger, which usually leads to overindulgence.
- Eating a high-fiber breakfast the morning of a big party helps to fill you up and keep you satisfied for longer. Good examples are shredded wheat, oatmeal, or whole grain cereals.
- Before leaving for a party, eat a light meal, such as a half a sandwich, crackers with low-fat cheese, a piece of fruit or some veggies. It's easier to pass up food if you're not ravenous.



At the Party

- When going to a buffet, observe all foods prior to getting in line. Decide what you'll eat and then grab a plate. Make only *one* trip through the line.
- Try to include some high protein foods, vegetables and a small/moderate portions of starches. Minimize or avoid high fat items such as fried foods or food covered in heavy sauces.
- Don't expect to exclude all holiday favorites, but only take items you *really* want. Take small portions of the high-calorie foods on your "must have" list. Balance these options out with low fat items, like fruit and vegetables.
- Don't hang out by the food table. Focus on socializing with others rather than eating.
- Avoid standing and eating, if possible. This can reduce mindless snacking.
- Try to enjoy every taste and eat slowly. This gives your mind time to acknowledge what your stomach feels and prevents over-eating.

Healthy Holiday Cooking

Don't Forget The Fiber!

- Serve whole grain side dishes like brown rice, quinoa, or bulgur to increase fiber
- Serve whole-grain crackers with low-fat dips or reduced fat cheeses
- Set out raw vegetables with low-fat dip or dressing
- Serve whole grain muffins or bread
- Make fruit-based desserts

Decrease Dietary Fat

Changing recipes to decrease fat can be easier than you think! Incorporating whole grains, fruits and vegetables helps.

- Try low-fat sauces for vegetables instead of cheese or cream-based sauces
- Use evaporated skim milk as a substitute for cream in some recipes
- Try reduced fat cheeses in recipes
- Use reduced fat sour cream or plain yogurt rather than sour cream
- Skim fat off of meat juices when making gravy or sauce
- Baste meat with fruit juice or broth instead of fat

Healthy Substitutes for High-Calorie Holiday Foods

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Hot-spiced cider | • Pretzels, popcorn, fresh veggies with fat free dressing |
| • Chestnuts | • Lean sliced meats with fat removed, served au jus |
| • Vegetables seasoned with herbs and spices | • Angel food cake |
| • Banana bread | • Low or non-fat pastries, cookies, or hard candies |
| • White or dark turkey without skin | |
| • Whole wheat or pumpernickel bread | |

Baking Modifications to Reduce Fat



Nutrition For Older Adults' Health



Healthy Holiday Baking Tips

1

Substitute unsweetened applesauce for shortening in lightly-colored baked goods such as muffins

High in Fat

1 cup vegetable shortening
205 grams fat, 1,812 calories

1 cup butter
184 grams fat, 1,628 calories

Low in Fat

1 cup applesauce
0 grams fat, 104 calories



2

Use pureed prunes in chocolate recipes for a great fudgy taste. Reduce the fat in recipe by half; replace with one-quarter of prune puree. For instance, if recipe needs one cup of butter, reduce butter to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup; then add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup prune puree.

3

Substitute 2 egg whites for every whole egg in a recipe.

4

Reduce fat and calories in chocolate desserts by using cocoa powder instead of chocolate.

3 Tbsp cocoa = 37 calories, 2.2 g fat

1 ounce unsweetened baking chocolate = 146 calories, 15 g fat

Calorie Content of Holiday Favorites

Item	Serving Size	Calories
Ham	6 oz. extra lean, roasted	280
Roasted Turkey	6 oz. meat, untrimmed	350
Stuffing	1 cup	340
Turkey Gravy	½ cup	250
Mashed Potatoes	1 cup	240
Candied Sweet Potatoes	¾ cup	365
Green Bean Casserole	1 cup	180
Cranberry Sauce	½ cup	210
Roll with Butter	1 roll	120
Wine, Punch, or Cider	2 glasses	200-250
Pumpkin Pie with Whipped Cream	1 slice	500
Pecan Pie	1 slice	500
Egg Nog	1 cup	400
Peanut Brittle	3.5 oz.	485
Lindt chocolate Truffle Ball	1 piece	80-90
Liqueur	2 shots (3 oz.)	300
Shortbread Cookies	2 small (1.2 oz.)	120
Fudge	2 small pieces (1.2 oz.)	140



Cranberry Apple Stuffing Muffins

A perfectly portioned low fat version of a holiday favorite!

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 28 minutes

Total Time: 38 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp canola oil
- 3 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 tsp fresh chopped thyme
- 2 tsp fresh chopped sage
- 2 tsp fresh chopped rosemary
- 8 cups unseasoned bread crumbs, dried/ toasted
- 1 large Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and chopped
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- pinch of salt (optional) and 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 cups fat-free, low sodium chicken broth

Preparation:

Coat a 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Heat oil on medium heat in a large skillet. Sauté celery, onion, and herbs for 5 minutes. Add apples and sauté for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat.

Place bread crumbs and dried cranberries in a large mixing bowl. Add sautéed vegetables. Season with a pinch of salt, if desired and some freshly ground black pepper. Add egg followed by broth. Stir everything well.

Spoon stuffing mixture into muffin tin.

Bake for 18-20 minutes, until golden.

Makes 12-15 stuffing muffins.

Per muffin: Calories 138, Calories from fat 21, Total fat 2.3g (sat 0.4g), Cholesterol 18mg, Sodium 260mg, Carbohydrate 24.8g, Protein 4.4g



What's in the News?

Holiday Eating Without the Guilt—or the Pounds By Kathleen Doheny, Health Day Reporter

This article does a great job of describing the guilt that often follows holiday meals. Forming a plan before heading out to parties and dinners can help. Here are a few of her suggestions: Using the “pick and choose” approach rather than sampling all foods set out on the buffet table. Eating before arriving to holiday gatherings helps guests approach the buffet table more conscious of what they put on their plate.

Remembering alcohol is high in calories and drinking it may cause a higher intake of food. If eating out, ask the server for healthy, tasty options.

When hosting parties, remember that the host has control over how dishes are made and their nutritional content.

Making time for exercise makes a difference, even if it is a ten minute walk. Everyone has time for that!

Stand firm when others are pushing you to try more foods or eat again. Starting off with a compliment, such as, “It tastes great, but I am full,” can be a tactful way to do so.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Healthday/holiday-eating-guilt-pounds/story?id=9178227>

Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

While the rumors stating Americans commonly gain five pounds over the holidays are false, many Americans are too thick around the middle in general. With a single holiday meal reaching 3,500 calories, the equivalent of one pound of body fat, a thing or two can be improved in holiday meals to make a difference.

A research article summary states that most Americans gain an average of one pound during the holidays. Adults typically gain 0.4-1.8 pounds per year, how this is spread out over the year was undetermined. Healthy holiday cooking is a way to cut down on added calories in the holiday season. Cutting the sugar in recipes, using fresh fruits for flavor, and reducing salt can make holiday foods much healthier.

The most important tip to remember over the holidays is to “balance food, activity and fun,” says Greta Macaire, R.D.

<http://www.newschannel5.com/story/13721191/tips-for-healthy-holiday-eating>

Now is Your Chance to Win a Prize!

It's that time of year to break out all your old serving platters! Are yours looking a little outdated? After learning new information from this website, do you want to bring fresh veggies and dip to a gathering but don't have the right serve-ware to do so? You're in luck!



These
could be
yours...here's how!

Where?: Visit the Healthy Eating Tip of the Month board in the University Hospital Cafeteria!

Who?: Anyone who visits the Healthy Eating Tip of the Month Board and enters their name and contact information is eligible!

How?: Visit the Healthy Eating Tip display board. Take a contest entry slip and fill out your contact information. Place it in the manila envelope attached to the board. If your name is drawn, the prize will be mailed to you!

When?: Names will be collected throughout the month of December. One name will be drawn at the end of the month.

What?: The Winner will receive the serve-ware shown above, which is perfect for filling with fresh veggies and low fat dip!

References

Research Articles/ Journals

1. Yanovski JA, Yanovski SZ, Sovik KN, et al. A Prospective Study of Holiday Weight Gain. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2000; 342.12: 861-867.
2. Squires S. Controlling holiday weight gain: lessons from the lean plate club. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. March-April 2007; 39,2: S51-S52.
3. Hull HR, Hester CN, Fields DA. The effect of the holiday season on body weight and composition in college students. *Nutr Metab Lond*). December 2006: 3:44.



Patient Food and Nutrition Services
Nutrition Counseling Center
UH Room # 2A-237 (second floor)
1500 E. Medical Center Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(734-936-7527)

Websites

Guidelines for managing diabetes during the holidays:

www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/holiday-meal-planning

Ways to prevent foodborne illness during the holidays:

www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm092815.htm

Celebrating holidays with food allergies:

[www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/resourcespre.php?id=88&title=Celebrating%20holidays%20with%20food%20allergies%20\(from%20Valentines%20to%20Christmas\)](http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/resourcespre.php?id=88&title=Celebrating%20holidays%20with%20food%20allergies%20(from%20Valentines%20to%20Christmas))

Holiday Calorie information:

www.healthcastle.com/holiday_foods_shocker.shtml

Tips for Holiday eating from the American Dietetic Association:

www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=11644

Making good food choices during the holidays:

http://www.healthdiscovery.net/articles/healthy_holiday.htm