

Keeping the Holidays Healthy

Worried about making it through the holidays without gaining weight? With so much stress these days, overeating may be a significant issue for many of us this holiday season. Taking a sensible, balanced approach to holiday food temptations is the best way to avoid weight gain throughout the seasons. Here are some practical ways to pass the holidays in sensible moderation:

- Eat slowly and mindfully. Enjoy every bite and resist the temptation to have a second helping.
- Make healthy dishes. Think about adding a simple fruit salad or vegetables roasted in olive oil and seasonings to your meal planning.
- Enjoy holiday treats in moderation. Take tastes of foods. Have one cookie instead of five.
- Do not eat what you do not like. Consuming food out of obligation adds to your total calorie intake.
- Go skinless: When dining on turkey, choose a four-ounce portion (about the size of your fist) without the skin. This helps cut out some fat and cholesterol.
- Pay attention to portions: It is possible to treat yourself, but choose smaller portions. Have tastes of items instead of filling up.
- Limit high fat: Avoid fried foods, cheese-covered or -filled vegetable dishes, processed meats, cream-based soups, pies and baked goods. Drink a low-fat substitute instead of traditional eggnog (with thick cream and egg yolks).
- Know your triggers. If you can't have "just one" don't start sampling.
- Drinks have calories, too. Limit alcohol. Over-indulging adds calories and can impair your judgment.

Healthy Holiday Meal Substitutes

Nothing about the holidays is more enjoyable than sitting down to a nice, warm meal with your loved ones. Unfortunately, many of the dishes that accompany the turkey or other main course are full of unnecessary saturated fat and calories. Try these healthier substitutes:

Sweet Potato Casserole

- Use egg whites or Egg Beaters® in place of whole eggs
- Reduce the amount of margarine or use light margarine
- Add some applesauce to the sweet potato mixture
- Replace canned sweet potatoes with fresh sweet potatoes
- Choose pineapple packed in its own juice, not in heavy syrup
- Add a cut up apple to the streusel topping and cut down on the pecans
- Substitute orange juice for some of the melted margarine in the streusel topping

Stuffing

- Use low-fat margarine
- Replace whole eggs with egg whites or Egg Beaters
- Substitute chicken or turkey sausage for pork sausage
- Use fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- Choose whole-grain bread

Mashed Potatoes

- Use low-fat cream cheese or light butter
- Replace some of the potato with steamed cauliflower (it sounds odd, but it works)
- Use 2% milk or low-fat buttermilk in place of the heavy cream

Corn Bread

- Use low-fat buttermilk
- Substitute egg whites or Egg Beaters for whole eggs
- Cut down on the oil, and add an extra splash of milk or some applesauce