Healthy Holiday Eating

On average, Americans gain one to two pounds during the holiday season. While this weight gain does not seem like a lot, research shows it tends to stick and accumulate over the years. That can be 10 to 20 extra pounds in ten years!

Steps you can take to watch your waste line and eat healthier at a holiday gathering or party (if you need to).

⇒ Don’t over indulge thinking “I will diet as soon as the New Year starts” and then eat the "good stuff" while you can.
⇒ Do not skip meals throughout the day as then you will likely overeat when you do have food.
⇒ Have breakfast. It helps one consume fewer calories throughout the day, holiday or not.
⇒ Eat a light snack before going to a big dinner or party such as a piece of fruit, light yogurt, or a string cheese. This can help keep you from overeating.
⇒ Drink plenty of water each day (about 8 cups). This can include other beverages but watch sugary drinks. Alcohol does not count.
⇒ Fill your plate with vegetables and salad before going to the entrees and desserts. It can help you eat fewer calories overall.
⇒ Include fiber-rich foods such as fruits, veggies, and whole grains. These foods can satisfy your hunger with a lower amount of calories than many other foods.
⇒ Large, buffet-style meals can lead to second and third helpings. Everything in moderation can make a healthful eating plan and can include dessert. How much depends on what it is!
⇒ Enjoy your favorite holiday foods, just eat smaller portions of them.
⇒ Avoid overeating by using a smaller plate. Makes for better portion sizes.
⇒ Choose beverages wisely. Alcohol is high in calories. So are sodas, fruit punch, and eggnogs.
⇒ Reduce the calories in holiday recipes, such as swapping oil for applesauce.
⇒ Choose only foods you really want. Do not waste calories on mediocre foods or snacks.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities
Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.
Mindful eating is about awareness. When you eat mindfully, you slow down, pay attention to the food you’re eating, and savor every bite. — SUSAN ALBERS

- Eat slowly and savor every bite. Wait ten minutes before going back for seconds to see if you really are still hungry. It takes about 20 minutes for the food in your stomach to signal your brain that it is there.
- Avoid mindless eating, that is, do not just eat out of a bag while watching TV for example. Again, eat slowly and enjoy every bite.
- Food cravings (are they psychological) or is it actual hunger (physiological)? If you are having a craving or you are not sure, then get away from the situation and distract yourself. Do something else to get your mind off it. If you still feel hungry 20 minutes later, then have a healthier snack.
- After eating it is good to get some physical activity such as a walk.

- Enjoy good friends and family. The focus should not be about food so try not to socialize around food where you are apt to just pick things up and put them in your mouth. Move into another room or far enough away so you cannot munch while talking.

- Maintain perspective. Overeating one day will not make or break your eating plan. You will not gain weight from one day of overeating. If you overindulge at a holiday meal, put it behind you. Return to your usual plan the next day without guilt or despair. Enjoy the holidays and these recipes!

**Fruit Rice Cakes**  **Makes 6 servings of 1 rice cake**

- 6 rice cakes
- 1/4 cup low fat cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese, softened
- Sliced fruit such as kiwi, peaches, strawberries, apples, bananas, mandarin oranges, grapes, oranges, etc.

**Directions**

- Top each rice cake with 2 teaspoons cream cheese
- Arrange a variety of fruit pieces on top of the cream cheese.

**Easy Chicken Pot Pie**  **Makes 6 servings of 1/2 cup**

- 1-2/3 cup frozen mixed vegetables, thawed (about 12oz)
- 1 cup canned chicken (2 4-1/2oz or 1 10oz can)
- 1 (10-3/4oz) can condensed reduced-fat or regular cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup reduced-fat baking mix
- 1/2 cup skim or low fat milk
- 1 egg

**Directions:**

- Heat oven to 400 degrees. Mix vegetables, chicken, and soup together. Place in an ungreased 9” pie plate.
- In a medium bowl, stir baking mix, milk, and egg together until blended to make batter.
- Pour batter on top of chicken mixture.
- Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown.
Tooty-Fruity Pudding Cups  Makes 8 servings of 1/2 cup
- 1 (3.4oz) box instant vanilla pudding mix (can use sugar-free too)
- 2 cups skim or low fat milk
- 2 cups fresh or canned fruits of your choice, sliced (apples, bananas, peaches, pears, strawberries, blueberries, mango)
- 1-1/2 cups crunchy granola cereal (or can use toasted oats if granola doesn’t work for you)

Directions
- Mix pudding according to directions, using the 2 cups of milk. Cover with plastic wrap and chill until set.
- Into 8 individual small paper cups or other cups, layer each cup with fruit, then pudding, then cereal, and then repeat again. Ready to serve.

Fruity Fizz  Makes 1 serving of 1 cup
- Choose 1/2 cup of fizz: Seltzer water or diet ginger ale
- Choose 1/2 cup of 100% fruit juice: Grape, apple, orange, cranberry, or lemon
- Choose 1/2 cup of a fruit: Strawberries, grapes, blueberries, oranges, raspberries, peaches
- Pour fizz and juice over ice. Add in fruit and stir.

Examples: (1) Seltzer, apple juice, strawberries, (2) diet ginger ale, lemon juice, oranges, and (3) seltzer, cranberry juice, grapes

Recipes from North Carolina Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

Resources:
Holiday Eating from Eatright.org blog, December 2017


Do you have a questions or concerns about what to eat?
If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County’s Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible to have a free consultation with a Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269. Leave a message, if necessary, for dietitian to call you back.

Check out our website for nutrition resources:
http://ccceschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).
OFA—Healthy Holiday Eating November 2018
visit choosemyplate.gov for healthier options during the holidays

tweak the sweets

fruits make delicious desserts
VS
bake healthier
use recipes with pureed fruits instead of butter or oil

cheers to good health

drink water to manage calories
VS
spice it up
use spices and herbs instead of sugar and salt

brighten your meal

fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables
VS
swap the grains

choose whole wheat flour instead of white flour

skim the fat

try skim evaporated milk instead of heavy cream
VS
go easy on the gravy

a little bit of gravy goes a long way