Make your Holiday Healthy- Snack Smart

Bite sized treats are a tasty way to come together over the holidays with family and friends. With so many snacks around it can be easy to overindulge. Here are a few tips you can use to have a healthier holiday.

- **Choose healthy appetizers**- try choosing vegetable and fruit trays, bean dips or whole grain crackers. A snack is still a snack; but a healthier choice will leave you feeling less guilty.

- **Serve yourself with a SMALL plate**- when eating finger foods it’s easy to lose track of how much you are eating. By having a plate you can count the number of items you’re eating and be more in control. A smaller plate forces you to pick just a few of your favorites, not a sampling of every item.

- **Choose only 2-3 items at a time**- when a variety of food is available it’s tempting to try them all but this can lead to overeating. Think about which foods you want to try most and pick your favorites.

- **Remove yourself from the food**- chatting at the table where the food is can lead to “mindless eating.” Choose the snack you want and move the conversation to another room. When you can’t see it you won’t think about eating it.

- **Distract yourself with fun, not food**- if you feel yourself being drawn to the snack table, distract yourself. Chances are you’ll end up forgetting about your craving and enjoy more of the party!

- **Pace yourself, eat slow**- when eating with others it’s common to act as they do. If you are the first to finish a plate, but everyone else is still eating you may feel obligated to eat more. By eating slowly you can enjoy your meal more and have time for more conversation.

- **Think before you serve**- when serving yourself or getting up for seconds THINK: How full are you feeling? How much have I had to eat already and should I eat more? Remember small portions.

- **Don’t deprive yourself**- eating healthy during the holidays can be a challenge, enjoying a small treat is ok. A little indulgence goes a long way.

*Source:* These tips were inspired by “Mindless Eating” by Brian Wansink.
Cranberries originated in North America and are most commonly grown in Massachusetts. Cranberries grow on small bushes in swamps and bogs. In late September and October, farmers flood the area and use machines to shake off the berries. Cranberries float so farmers then “comb” the water to collect all the fruit! Because of an air pocket in the berry it will also bounce.

Cranberries are a good source of Vitamin C and fiber. They also contain antioxidants and other compounds that have health benefits. One compound can help prevent urinary tract infections.

Cranberries can be eaten fresh, dried, frozen, canned, or as juice. When dried or canned, sugar may be added. Reading the nutrition label can help you find cranberry products with less sugar. Cranberries are delicious when added to baked goods, salads, entrees, and stuffing.

**Apple Cranberry Salad**

**Ingredients:**
1 head of lettuce, torn into bite sized pieces (about 10 cups)
2 apples (medium, sliced)
½ cup walnuts (chopped)
1 cup dried cranberries
½ cup green onion (sliced)
¾ cup vinaigrette dressing

**Directions:**
1. Toss lettuce, apples, walnuts, cranberries, and green onions in large bowl.
2. Add dressing; toss to coat. Serve immediately.

**Nutrition Facts:** Serving Size: ⅛ of recipe, 140 calories, 45 calories from fat, 5g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 10mg sodium, 24g total carbohydrate, 3g dietary fiber, 19g sugar, 2g protein.

**Cranberry Sweet Potato Bake**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 ½ large sweet potatoes
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 large apple
- ¼ cup walnuts
- 2 tablespoons melted margarine
- 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ cup cranberry juice cocktail

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Wash sweet potatoes, cranberries and apple.
3. Cut sweet potato and apple into 1 inch cubes.
4. Combine sweet potatoes, cranberries, apple, and walnuts in a large bowl.
5. Add margarine, cinnamon, nutmeg to the bowl and mix.
6. Place mixture in a 2 quart shallow casserole dish. Pour cranberry juice over casserole.
7. Cover with foil and bake for 50 minutes or until potatoes are soft.
8. Let cool 10 minutes before serving

**Nutrition Facts:** Serving Size: ¾ cup, 145 calories, 54 calories from fat, 6g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 35mg sodium, 3g dietary fiber.


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**Layered Black Bean Dip**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 can black beans (15 ounces, drained and rinsed)
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon oregano
- ⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ cup salsa
- ½ cup light sour cream
- 2 ounces reduced-fat cheddar cheese (grated)

**Directions:**
1. Mash beans with fork or potato masher and mix with onion powder, oregano, garlic powder, and cayenne pepper. Spread onto a serving dish.
2. Top with salsa, sour cream, green onions and grated cheese.

**Nutrition Facts:** Serving Size: 2 tablespoons, 40 calories, 15 calories from fat, 1.5g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 5mg cholesterol, 150mg sodium, 4g total carbohydrate, 1g dietary fiber, 1g protein.

I can eat a rainbow: A fun look at healthy fruits and vegetables by Annabel Karmel. I can eat a rainbow is a bright and cheery book. Read this with your child to get them excited about fruits and vegetables while having fun. This book is full of pictures, characters, and animals created out of produce. After reading this book try making your own food animals! Remember, always wash your hands before preparing food.

**Fruity Peanut Butterfly**

**Ingredients:**
1 celery stalk
2 tablespoons peanut butter
1 thinly sliced apple

**Directions:**
1. Wash celery and apple. Cut celery into 2 ½ inch pieces.
2. Thinly slice the apple
3. Spread peanut butter on celery.
4. Place apple slices in peanut butter. They should look like wings.

**Nutrition Facts:** 57 calories, 29 calories from fat, 3.5g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 44mg sodium, 1g dietary fiber.

**Source:** www.myplate.gov

**Banana Caterpillar**

**Ingredients:**
1 banana
10-12 thin pretzel sticks
raisins

**Directions:**
1. Peel and slice banana into pieces about one inch long.
2. Use the pretzel sticks to make legs, place them under the pieces of banana or stick the pretzel into the banana. You can also use the pretzel to make antennas.
3. Place the raisins on top of the banana to make spots, you can also use them to make eyes.

**Nutrition Facts:** 85 calories, 0 calories from fat, 0g total fat, 0mg cholesterol, 2mg sodium, 2g dietary fiber.

**Source:** www.myplate.gov