

**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
of Schenectady County

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## Holiday Eating Without the Guilt

Despite the joy of the season, eating during the holidays can be complicated and stressful, especially if you are trying to manage a chronic condition. Continue reading for tips and tricks to minimize the stress and relax enough to enjoy your favorite foods during the holidays.



**Tip #1: EAT!** Please remember that you need to eat regularly, even on days there are parties or celebrations.

Skipping meals to “save” calories or carbs for later does not work, and you will only end up feeling hungry and cranky—not really how you want to feel during the holidays. Keeping to your normal meal routine (whatever that looks like) will help to ensure you have the energy to get everything on your to-do list done.

**Tip #2:** Try to incorporate protein, fat AND carbohydrates into each meal. Including all 3 of these macronutrients will ensure you are satisfied, so you will be less likely to overindulge. For people with diabetes, including these components will reduce blood sugar spikes.

***Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities***

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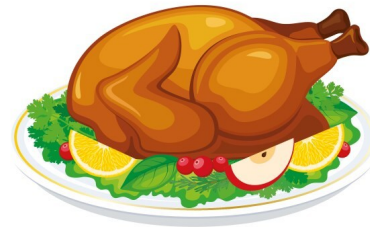
Tip #3: Remember that guilt is NOT an ingredient. The foods we eat during the holidays may be richer, less nutrient-dense and less “healthy” but they still provide energy, protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. You should enjoy these foods without feeling like you are “failing” at your diet or “being bad”. Food has no moral value. It is just food. We need to eat no matter the season.



Tip #5: Savor the foods of the season. One day of eating will not impact your health, and worrying about what or how you’re eating will just make the season more stressful (and possibly give you indigestion). Remember that you do not typically eat these foods 11 months out of the year, so enjoying them when you can is perfectly fine.



Tip #4: Holiday foods CAN fit into specific dietary restrictions. They are special for a reason. They may invoke precious memories of loved ones who are no longer around, or allow you to feel close to people who are far away. You may need to limit the amount you consume (if you are counting carbs or watching sodium intake, for example), but you can still eat them.



Tip #6: Show yourself compassion. The holidays are stressful enough without adding food guilt to the mix. Give yourself grace to enjoy the season, be with the people you love, and create lasting memories.

## No-Bake Cookies

Recipe from Southern Living

Active Time: 15 mins    Total Time: 1 hour    Makes: 24 cookies

### Ingredients:

1.5 cups dark brown sugar  
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
1/4 tsp kosher salt  
1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut into 1/2 inch pieces  
1/2 cup whole milk  
2.5 cups quick-cooking oats  
1/2 cup crunchy peanut butter  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
Flaky sea salt



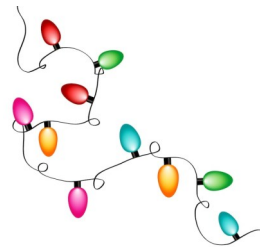
### Directions:

1. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment. Whisk together brown sugar, cocoa and kosher salt in a large saucepan until combined.
2. Add butter and milk to saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until sugar and cocoa are fully dissolved, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
3. Working quickly, stir in oats, peanut butter and vanilla using a heatproof spatula, stirring until well combined.
4. Drop heaping tablespoons of the mixture onto prepared baking sheets in a single layer, gently pressing center of each cookie to flatten slightly.
5. Let cookies cool completely (at room temp for 45 mins or in the fridge for 30 mins). Sprinkle with flaky sea salt after they have cooled for 10 mins. Serve.

Nutrition info (per cookie):    156 calories    3g protein  
   21g carbohydrates    2g fiber    7g fat    58mg sodium

Tip #7: Move your body. Even a 10 minute walk can help to reduce bloating, improve digestion, reduce stress and make for a more enjoyable holiday season. Put on some holiday music and dance in the living room.

Have a snowball fight. Build a snowman. Walk around the neighborhood to look at light displays.



Tip #8: Listen to your body. Food serves many purposes, not just giving us energy. We use food for comfort, to belong, to connect with people. None of these reasons are “wrong”, and beating yourself up for nourishing your body, mind or soul is a waste of time and energy. Relax and enjoy the festivities of the season.

**Resources:** <https://www.southernliving.com/no-bake-cookies-8674250>

<https://extension.sdstate.edu/intuitive-eating-practices-and-strategies-holiday-season>

**Consumer-centered access for long-term care information, referrals and assessments.**  
**For information, call 518-382-8481, #9, ext. 304**



**Do you have 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 for a free consultation with Debbie Griswold, Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269 to contact or leave a message.

**Check out our website for nutrition resources: <http://ccschenectady.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).

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