

... DECEMBER 2008 ...

QUICK TAKES



Reducing Calories in Your Recipes

- Use fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole or 2% milk.
- Replace at least half of the butter or oil in muffin and quickbread recipes with unsweetened applesauce.
- Fat-free egg substitute can be used in the place of real eggs in most recipes.
- Use nonfat yogurt or fat-free sour cream instead of the full-fat versions.

Keeping the Balance: Holiday Eating Survival Guide

With all the rich holiday meals, parties, and extra treats floating around the workplace, it's no wonder that holiday weight gain affects most of us. Just because it is the holiday season does not mean we should cast caution to the wind and forget about our healthy eating goals. The key is to find a balance between enjoying the festive season and keeping your health in focus. Here are 3 healthy tips to help you keep that balance.

Tip #1: Fill up on the good stuff

There are plenty of healthy foods at most holiday parties, the key is to seek them out and fill your plate with them.

- Start at the vegetable crudité's platter; just be careful with the dip.
- If appetizer platters are garnished with grapes, clementines or other fruit, don't be shy about scooping them onto your plate as well.
- For your meal choose lean turkey or fish, and limit the gravy or sauce.
- Green beans, sweet potatoes and green salad are three good choices for side dishes.

If you're concerned the party you're going to will have limited healthy options, offer to bring a fresh fruit platter.

Tip #2: Have a snack

Are you spending the evening shopping and likely to miss out on a healthy dinner? Will you be at a social engagement surrounded by tempting goodies?

For busy shopping sprees, bring snacks with you. A snack will help keep hunger at bay and give you energy to get through your shopping list. You'll be less tempted to stop at the nearest fast-food joint or hit up the food court at the mall.

Have a light snack before going out. If you show up hungry you're more likely to over-eat.

Great snacks that you can throw in your bag include:

- Snack bars. Choose one with less than 200 calories and less than 15 grams of sugar.
- Fruits and veggies. Bananas and oranges are great snacks that travel safely in their own protective peel. Bring a bag of baby carrots, celery sticks and pepper slices.
- Snack mix. Make your own with whole-grain cereal, dried fruit, and some nuts.

Tip #3: Watch your beverages

Remember that beverages have calories. The calories in the hot chocolate, apple cider, egg nog and cocktails we love during the holiday seasons can really start to add up. If you are going to drink alcohol, wine spritzers, lite beer and non-caloric mixers like diet soda and seltzer will help keep your calories on the lower end.

Five Strategies for Healthy Eating

Ready to make a commitment to healthy eating? Start thinking about your eating habits the way you think about your career, managing money, or other important priorities. Here are some specific strategies for success.

Strategy #1: Get Value — Nutritional Value

One of the most important strategies for eating better is to plan your meals ahead of time. Don't wait until you're too hungry or don't have enough time to find or prepare a healthy option.

When planning your meals, try to include something of nutritional value each time.

- Focus on getting more lean proteins, low-fat dairy products, fruits and vegetables.
- Limit or avoid "empty" calories from white breads, white rice, and sweets (even the low-fat kind).
- These foods don't have much nutritional value, and since they lack fiber, they're less likely to keep you feeling full.
- If you make just one change per meal — such as adding more veggies and having less meatballs in your pasta — you can make a big impact on your diet.

Strategy #2: Do It Yourself!

Sometimes if you want to do a project the right way, you have to do it yourself. Remember, restaurants, take-out venues and pizza places are not in business to watch your diet. That's your business. So whenever possible look to prepare your own food. This doesn't mean you have to be a gourmet! If you're short on time, look for ready-made meals and healthy frozen entrées at the supermarket. They're out there!

Strategy #3: Know Your Serving Sizes

Even if your weight isn't an issue, it's important to be aware of the recommended serving sizes for the foods you eat. Here's your cheat sheet:

- Chicken, meat or fish: 1 serving = 3 ounces, the size of the palm of your hand or a deck of cards
- Milk and yogurt: 1 serving = 1 cup
- Grains: 1 serving = 1 slice of bread or 1/2 cup rice, pasta or potato, or 3/4 cup dry cereal
- Vegetables: 1 serving = 1/2 cup cooked
- Fruit: 1 serving = 1 small fruit or 1/2 cup fruit salad

Strategy #4: Fit in Your Veggies!

Look for meal ideas that include vegetables that you'll actually enjoy.

- Start with soup: Vegetable purees and vegetable soups
- Add color! If your meal looks like a rainbow with red tomatoes, green leafy vegetables, and orange carrots you're on your way to a healthier diet. Colorful veggies give you a nutritional boost to fill up with less calories.
- Let someone else do the work! Most supermarkets offer a variety of veggies that are pre-washed and pre-cut. It's worth the cost if you're more likely to get these foods in your diet!

Strategy #5: Eat Often (but not too much!)

The good news about healthy eating is you get plenty of by spacing meals and snacks evenly throughout the day. Don't go for long periods without eating anything. Shoot for at least three meals and one or two snacks to keep you energized throughout your day.

Smashed Potatoes with Chives

A perfect side dish for the busy holidays – you don't have to peel the potatoes or mash them into a smooth puree.

Ingredients

4 pounds small red potatoes, scrubbed and quartered
¾ cup low-fat (1%) milk, heated to steaming
1 tablespoon minced onion
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup snipped chives or thinly sliced scallion greens

Preparation

1. Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil and cook until soft, about 12 minutes. Drain and transfer to a large shallow bowl.
2. Crush with a potato masher, but do not mash until smooth. Stir in hot milk, onion, garlic, salt and pepper. Add chives, stirring gently to mix. Serve hot.

Make Ahead:

The potatoes can be made several hours in advance and re-warmed in a covered dish in the oven.

Makes: 8 Servings

(Photo Source: © Cole Riggs/Alere)



Nutritional Info/Serving: 191 Calories, 0.3g Fat, 0g Saturated fat, 0g Trans Fat, 5.0g Protein, 43g Carbohydrate, 4.0g Fiber, 258mg Sodium