



Nutrition News - December 2021

Healthy Holiday Eating

The holiday season is in full swing! From meal times to driving, take some time to be mindful of your actions during the holiday season. During this busy time of year, people are often stressed, tired...and guilty or shameful around food choices. When at parties and holiday gatherings, choose foods that are healthy and delicious for you. In this month's *Nutrition News* you'll find tips to be sure your holiday is both happy and healthy.

HEALTHY EATING

Choose wisely, even with healthier foods. Ingredients and nutrients may vary by brand and preparation. Select products with the lowest amounts of sodium, added sugars, saturated fat and trans fat. Eat reasonable portions of a variety of foods. Start by preparing healthier meals at home.

BE SMART ABOUT BEVERAGES

Egg nog: Mix it up. Fill your glass with half to three-quarter parts of low-fat or skim milk, and the other part eggnog. You'll still get the flavor without all the calories.

Apple cider: read the labels. Check the added sugar content, which can increase caloric intake and cause weight gain. Best to choose options with less sugar.

Enjoy "mocktails." Serve non-alcoholic versions of your favorite cocktails to lower the calories. Be sure to check the nutrition label, because sometimes products that are alcohol-free have more added sugar.

Break It Up: Drink a glass of water or sparkling water between each beverage. This will help fill you up, leaving less room to overindulge.

MINDFUL MEALS

Limit sodium, savor the flavor. Use herbs and spices (rosemary and cloves) to flavor dishes, instead of salt or butter. When using canned vegetables, drain and rinse to remove excess sodium. Be mindful of the gravy. Limit gravy to a tablespoon, to avoid excess saturated fat, calories and sodium.

HEALTHY HOLIDAY PARTIES

Whether it's a potluck or not, *offer to bring a healthy dish* that you know you can enjoy, but bring enough in case you need to share.

Split a dessert with someone: you'll cut half the calories and fat.

Mix it up. If alcohol is being served, alternate each glass with a glass of water. Doing this will help reduce your thirst levels, fill your stomach, and you will unconsciously consume fewer calories. Many holiday beverages have so much added sugar, they may as well be a dessert. Keep in mind that what else you've eaten; it may be best to enjoy these drinks on another day.

MAKING TRADITIONS HEALTHY

- Instead of butter, try substituting with vegetable oil or unsweetened applesauce when baking. Use low-fat or nonfat milk instead of whole milk or heavy cream.

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Healthy Holiday Eating (continued)

- Instead of white flour, use half white and half whole-wheat flour.
- Instead of adding chocolate chips or candies, add dried fruit.
- Use a lower-calorie sugar substitute.
- Use extracts like vanilla, almond and peppermint to add flavor, instead of sugar or butter.
- Compare labels of holiday ingredients, and choose products with lower amounts of sodium and added sugars
- Use whole-grain breads, rice and pasta instead of white.
- Use spices, fresh herbs and citrus juice to flavor foods and drinks, instead of excess salt and added sugars.

MOVE MORE, BE WELL

Instead of heading for the couch after the big meal, Bundle up and head outdoors for some fresh air to go for a walk or run. As always, when going for a walk, bring a buddy. Make a move by adding movements and gestures to your favorite card or board games.

Break up the binge-watching. In between bowl games or your favorite holiday movies, take a walk or do something active.

Get your ZZZs: Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night to stay in the healthy zone. If you have a tradition of staying up until midnight to ring in the New Year, remember that much of the world celebrates many hours before we do in the US. For example, London is five hours ahead of us. You could watch their celebration and have plenty of time to get to sleep on schedule.

The happiest and healthiest of holidays to you, and we'll see you in 2022!



Nimesh Bhargava, MS, RD, CDN
Nutrition Services Coordinator

Easy Recipe: Vegetarian Collard Greens

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 large onion, chopped
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1 pound collard greens, chopped
3 cups vegetable stock
2 tomatoes, seeded and chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a large pot over medium heat, heat oil and butter.

Saute the onions until slightly softened, about 2 minutes, then add the red pepper flakes and garlic, cook another minute.

Add collard greens and cook another minute. Add the vegetable stock, cover and bring to a simmer.

Cook until greens are tender, about 40 minutes.

Add tomatoes and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Source: Food Network

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