

Cutting Holiday Calories

Holiday meals and gatherings don't have to expand your waistline or break the bank. Less is more, simple is best!

Make your holiday meal the main attraction!

Offer just a few light appetizers instead of a buffet table full of rich, high calorie hors d'oeuvres. You'll save preparation time and money by buying fewer ingredients while your family and guests will enjoy the holiday meal without feeling full before sitting down for dinner.

Simplify your holiday menu.

Enjoy a few quality dishes versus so many meat, potato and side dishes so that one dish blends into the next. Serve either turkey or ham, and skip the rolls if you're making potatoes and stuffing. Fewer dishes means fewer calories, and less money spent at the grocery store.

Make it yourself!



Homemade will taste better and can be modified with healthy ingredients. Packaged, processed and frozen pre-made foods are usually more expensive and often contain hidden sugars, fat and sodium.

Avoid using stacks of paper plates on the hors d'oeuvres table. This becomes an invitation to repeatedly start fresh and fill another plate with food. When real plates are used, the tendency is to fill the plate a few times and retire it for the night. Save both the planet as well as calories from overeating!

Healthy Holiday Meals on a Budget:

Trim calories and fat, as well as a few dollars off your grocery bill

- **Bagged produce such as potatoes, apples and onions** are a better buy than when purchased individually by the pound. Add apples to your favorite holiday desserts, salads and turkey stuffing for added flavor.
- **Save money by purchasing whole leaf lettuce and greens** instead of pre-packaged ones. Wash the leaves as soon as you get home from the grocery and store the cleaned greens in a baggie with a damp paper towel. You'll have fresh salad makings available for easy use at a fraction of the cost.
- **Potatoes are an inexpensive holiday side dish.** Bake them whole or mash them with skim milk and fat free sour cream instead of butter. Use sweet potatoes for added flavor AND nutrients!
- **Homemade soups made with leftover turkey are a great way to stretch your food dollars.** Add vegetables, rutabaga, potatoes or wild rice for a nutritious and healthy stew.
- **Pumpkin pie and fruit cobblers and crisps** are inexpensive to make and can contain far fewer calories than a pecan or cream pie.
- **Use calorie-free club soda instead of tonic** to add fizz to your punch bowl. Wine spritzers made with club soda will cut your calories in half and stretch your bottle of wine
- **Ground meats are a cost-effective choice** for appetizers such as meatballs in marinara sauce or lasagna holiday dinner. Choose extra-lean ground turkey, chicken or beef to trim the most fat.

Serve just the amount of food needed to adequately feed your family and guests.

Too much food in the serving bowls is an invitation for overeating. If you want to make extra food for meals later in the week, put the leftovers in airtight containers before the food is served. People will be less likely to overeat, and you'll have a timesaving meal in the freezer for the busy holiday season.



Surviving the Holiday Nutrition Threat

November marks the kick-off to the holiday season which we all know is filled with parties packed with fattening foods and sugary drinks. For many of us, November makes our healthy habits go right out the window, but not this year! This year you can take charge of your holiday eating by following the tips below:



Don't "save calories"

"Saving calories" or skipping meals in preparation for an event or large meal can significantly slow your metabolism and lead to overeating later. Instead, eat smaller meals throughout the day: three meals and one or two healthy snacks.

Don't drink your calories

Stick to water and limit the sugary and alcoholic drinks since these can pack on hundreds of extra calories. Also, staying hydrated throughout the day will keep you from overeating. Shoot for at least 64 ounces of water every day!

Know your body

Practice mindful eating: In the midst of a holiday gathering it can be easy to mindlessly consume a lot more food than you had intended. Perhaps you're having a good conversation and you mindlessly snack as you talk, you stress-eat throughout the gathering, or you sit around a buffet and keep eating only because others are too. Learning to be more mindful of your body and eating can be a great asset to managing your weight this holiday season. Try some of following:

- ❖ Slow down: Take deep breaths before and after each bite. Chew slowly. Make it a competition with yourself to be the last person to finish eating. Eating slower allows time for your stomach to signal your brain that you are full; this usually takes about 15-20 minutes.
- ❖ Push it away: You are less likely to mindlessly eat food if it's not right in front of you.
- ❖ Don't let yourself get too hungry: When you are extremely hungry you are less likely to eat slowly and choose healthy options. Try a 150-250 calorie healthy snack in between meals if you feel yourself becoming hungry before mealtime.

Save some for later

Leftovers can be your new best friend! Not only will putting food aside save you calories, but it will also save you time on the nights you are too busy to cook. For tips on food storage safety check out:

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

Focus on fruits and vegetables

Holiday meals are often packed with lots of high-fat and calorie-dense foods. Try filling up on fruits and vegetables first and take smaller portions of the meats, stuffings, breads, and cheesy foods. Not only will you cut out a significant amount of fat and calories, but also the nutrient-dense produce will give you the energy you need to fully enjoy all of your holiday parties.

