



Healthy Eating Tips for the Holidays

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Here are 7 simple tips for eating well while enjoying the spirit of the season.

1. Don't skip meals

Saving your appetite for a big holiday party or feast? Skipping breakfast and lunch to “save” all of your calories for dinner typically leads to overeating. Instead, plan to eat regularly by having a balanced breakfast and satisfying lunch the day of the event. Focus on high-quality foods such as veggies, fruit, protein, healthy fat, and whole grains. Eat a small snack an hour before the event (for example, plain yogurt with a piece of fruit). You will find it easier to make healthy choices if you are not too hungry.

2. Watch portion sizes

Holiday meals tend to be large, buffet-style and include second and third helpings. It's often not what you eat, but how much that can lead to overindulgence at any time of the year. Using a smaller plate, for instance, allows you to put less food on your plate and encourages proper portion sizes. Also, start by filling your plate with vegetables and salad before going to the entrees and desserts.





3. Savor each bite and stop when you are no longer hungry

We all know the importance of eating slowly and waiting before going for seconds, mainly because it takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the signal that you are actually full. Remember to pace yourself. By savoring every delicious bite, you are more likely to take your time and stop when you have had enough.

4. Enjoy dessert and be mindful while doing it

There will likely be an endless assortment of cakes, cookies, pies, and ice cream during holiday events. What foods do you really enjoy? Promise yourself that you will have a few favorites over the holidays and aim to make healthy choices the rest of the time.

5. Alternate alcoholic drinks with water or lower-calorie beverages

If you are going to drink alcohol, do so in moderation. Try to alternate between water and alcohol to minimize intake and stay hydrated. Remember, a fancy sweet drink or eggnog may have almost as many calories as a meal. Choose lower-calorie mixers, such as club soda with lemon, sparkling water or diet pop. Another way to watch the calories is to drink light beer or wine spritzers ($\frac{1}{2}$ wine, $\frac{1}{2}$ club soda). Plain coffee and tea can also be an option.





6. Be active

Stay active over the holidays. Consider incorporating winter physical activities into your holiday festivities. Sledding, tobogganing, making a snowman and ice-skating are just a few ways to stay active and enjoy time with family and friends. Alternatively, you could go for a walk or hike after your holiday dinner. Shoveling snow can be another great way to get those muscles working.

7. Lose the guilt – enjoy this time of year!

The holidays are a special time of the year. Enjoying holiday foods, like gingerbread cookies, is a part of the experience. If you do happen to eat more than you planned during this holiday season, don't beat yourself up. Try to get back to your healthy eating habits as soon as you possibly can.

