

Holiday Eating and Drinking

This winter holiday season is full of festive gatherings and joyous celebrations, but no one takes joy in the added pounds that so often result from feasting on holiday foods. Use these smart tips from the American Heart Association to make substitutions and choices that will help you stay heart-healthy and look good in all those family pictures!



Health and Wellness

Holiday Beverages

Eggnog

- Fill your glass a quarter full with low-fat or skim milk and the remaining three quarters full with eggnog. You'll still get the flavor without all the calories.
- Cut the alcohol. This simple step will save you up to 100 calories!
- Pass on that big dollop of whipped cream to avoid the extra sugar and saturated fat.

Hot Chocolate

- When ordering hot chocolate at a restaurant, ask that it be made with low-fat or skim milk and without the whipped cream.
- For instant hot chocolate at home, look for packets marked "low-fat/fat-free." Add the mix to low-fat milk, skim milk or hot water.
- Limit the toppings. Use five to eight mini-marshmallows instead of large ones. If using whipped cream, look for low-fat versions and stick to less than one tablespoon.

Apple Cider

- When buying cider at the store, check the added sugar content. Many products contain added sugars, which can increase your calorie intake and cause weight gain. Choose low-sugar and sugar-free options.
- When making cider at home, use low-sugar apple juice and a variety of spices like cinnamon sticks, cloves, nutmeg and whole cranberries. You'll keep all the flavor while cutting calories.

Eating at Holiday Work Parties

Get involved. There's usually a list to volunteer to bring dishes for the party, so sign up and make something heart-healthy!

Use the buddy system. Split a dessert with someone to cut the calories and fat in half and avoid being wasteful. It's a win-win!

Mix it up. If alcohol is being served, drink in moderation or not at all. If you do choose to drink, alternate each alcoholic drink with a glass of water. This will help reduce your thirst while filling your stomach—plus you'll consume fewer calories.

Watch seasonal drinks. Many holiday beverages have added sugar.

Eating with the Family

Limit sodium. Breads, poultry and canned soups are three common foods that can add a hefty amount of sodium to your diet. When shopping for ingredients to prepare your holiday meal, compare the labels to find lower sodium varieties.

Savor the flavor. Use herbs and spices to flavor dishes instead of salt or butter. Rosemary, cloves, thyme, sage and paprika are all popular options that pack a flavorful punch.

Go fresh. Choose fresh fruits and vegetables to use in your dishes. If using canned products, rinse with water in a colander before cooking and serving to reduce sodium.

Keep meat portions in check. A serving of meat is three ounces, about the size of a deck of cards. If you're having a combination of meats, take smaller portions of each.

What's in it? Holiday casseroles tend to be filled with fat, sugar and/or sodium. Limit yourself to a small spoonful of casserole and fill the rest of your plate with a serving of lean protein along with roasted or sautéed veggies and tossed salad instead.

Treat yourself right. To enjoy dessert without losing control, sample a few selections rather than having full servings of each. For example, have one bite of pie, half a cookie or one small square of fudge.

Source:

American Heart Association: Holiday Healthy Eating Guide:
http://www.heart.org/idc/group/heart-public/@wcm/@fc/documents/downloadable/ucm_455757.pdf

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