



MENU

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How to Maintain a Healthy Diet During the Holidays

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55 ARTICLES

This blog was written in conjunction with Gerry Samantha Eichelberger and Jordan Carbone, Florida State University College of Medicine students.

'Tis the season for singing, laughter, get-togethers and, of course, food galore. With the holiday season here and pumpkin pie tempting you at every turn, it can be challenging to stick to your meal plan and maintain a healthy diet.

Here are some simple strategies to help you enjoy the festivities with family and friends while remaining on track — and even eating your cake, too!

Make smart recipe modifications: Create your favorite holiday recipes with healthier substitutions. Instead of using butter when baking, try unsweetened applesauce and canola oil. Replace sour cream with Greek yogurt. Reduce the amount of heavy cream or whole milk and use skim milk. Simple swaps like these can lower fat and caloric intake while still producing a delicious dish.

Portion control: If you're someone who enjoys the regular, authentic ingredients, limit how much you eat.

Hydrate: [Studies](#) show drinking more water is linked to eating fewer calories and less sugar, salt and cholesterol. Drinking more water and less sugary, high-calorie beverages is an easy way to facilitate diet management. A 2015 study published by The Obesity Society concluded that just two glasses of water before a meal can aid in curbing your appetite.



Take your time: Eating more slowly can reduce how much you eat. [Research](#) shows that it takes approximately 20 minutes for your stomach to relay to your brain just how much you have eaten and let you know you are satisfied.

Avoid meal skipping: Skipping meals tends to lead to over-eating and making unhealthy choices. It also can cause the body to lower its metabolism, burn less energy and feel fatigued. Prepare small, healthy snacks to keep your metabolism active, especially when you are on-the-go during the holiday season.

Be active: Dedicate more time to exercise to offset temptations and splurges. Consider devoting more time to physical activity than normal during the holiday season. Even taking a 30-minute walk with friends or family after a meal can go a long way.

Make a Plan

The best approach is one with a plan. Eat fewer carbs or sweets throughout the day if you know you are attending a holiday dinner or party. Avoid dips and sauces that can add hidden calories, salt or sugar. Offer to bring a healthy dish to a gathering. If you are going out to dinner, try to select foods that are lower in calories like vegetables and lean proteins.

Think ahead and implement some of these strategies to stay on track with healthy eating choices. With holiday spirit all around, it is indeed possible to enjoy the season, maintain a balanced diet and avoid the sugar spikes associated with the holidays.