

Tips for Healthy Holiday Parties

It's the holidays and that means it's the start of the party seasons. With each party comes the challenge of keeping your commitment to healthful eating.

If you are hosting a party this holiday season **you can reduce fat and calories without giving up taste** by swapping out a few ingredients in your favorite recipes.

- Use low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth in your mashed potatoes to add flavor and cut back on added butter or margarine.
- Substitute applesauce for oil, margarine or butter in muffins and quick breads like banana bread. Try substituting a small amount at first, the more you substitute the more the texture of the final product changes.
- For dips, sauces and pie toppings use low fat or fat-free Greek yogurt, sour cream and whipped cream.
- Sliced almonds make a delicious, crunchy topping in place of fried onion rings.
- Choose reduced-fat or low-fat cheeses for salads and casseroles.

Pack your shopping cart with plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits like sweet potatoes, winter squash, broccoli, carrots and green beans. Apples, cranberries and pears combine easily for a tasty salad, fruit crisp or topping for the turkey.

If you are a guest at a party, consider these tips to keep your night healthy, happy and safe:

- If you plan on treating yourself later, start your day with a small meal that includes whole grains, fruit, low-fat or fat-free dairy and protein like eggs, ham or peanut butter.
- Don't starve yourself beforehand. Rather, eat a small, lower-calorie meal or snack such as fruit or a bagel so you aren't tempted to overdo your calorie intake for the day.
- Choose carefully between foods you definitely will eat, those you will sample and those you will skip.
- Don't rush to eat. Socialize and settle into the festivities before you eat.
- Move your socializing away from the buffet or appetizer trays. This will minimize the unconscious nibbling.
- Plan a brisk walk sometime during the day this will help you burn extra calories and rev up your metabolism.

When it comes to alcohol, start with a calorie-free, nonalcoholic beverage like infused water or seltzer with a lime twist.

Satisfy your thirst before having an alcoholic drink. Remember moderation.

Keep in mind, even **a single drink will affect your reflexes** for several hours. If you plan to drink, keep your holidays merry for everyone by designating a driver who won't be drinking.

The holidays are a great time for celebrating with friends and family over food and drinks. But with just a little preparation, you can keep off the extra holiday pounds and still enjoy all that the season has to offer.

Happy Holidays!

Adapted from eatright.org website