

Healthy Holidays

Kristin Cuculovski, MS, RDN, CSO, LD
Oncology Clinical Nutrition Coordinator



Presentation Goals

- Discuss common holiday health concerns
- Identify the health benefits of some favorite holiday foods
- Review behavioral tips for making healthy food choices
- Discuss recipe modifications
- Review stress & staying active during the holidays



Holiday Eating Worries

- Weight gain
- Making unhealthy food choices
- Overeating
- Stress



Weight Gain

- How much weight does the average person gain between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day?
 - Average holiday weight gain is between 0.75 to 1 lb. but some studies did gain 5 lbs. or more.
 - Those who were overweight or obese gained more pounds than those who were normal weight.
 - Most fail to lose that weight after the holiday which is one reason why our weight creeps up from year to year.

Weight Gain Prevention

- Change your mindset
 - Don't expect to lose weight during the holiday season
 - Focus on not gaining weight
- Plan to keep a regular exercise pattern to allow some flexibility in your food choices
- Splurge on foods that make your holiday meaningful
- Focus on portion size
- Keep an eye on foods that have health benefits

Benefits of Your Favorite Holiday Foods

Holiday Food	Benefits
Party Nuts *Serving = 1oz (approx. 22 almonds)	Great source of heart-healthy unsaturated fat & fiber
Turkey *Serving = 3oz (deck of cards)	Best source of protein at the meal. Contains Vitamins B6, B12, choline, selenium & zinc
Mashed Potatoes *Serving = ½ cup	Contains Vitamin B6, potassium, copper & vitamin C
Sweet Potatoes *Serving = 1 medium potato	Contains fiber, vitamin A (beta carotene), vitamin C, potassium & manganese
Green Beans *Serving = 1 cup = 45 calories	Low in calories, practically every vitamin & mineral is present

Benefits of Your Favorite Holiday Foods

Holiday Food	Benefits
Root Vegetables (turnips, beets, carrots, parsnips)	Choose a variety to get most vitamins & minerals like vitamin C, beta carotene & folate
Corn	Full of antioxidant phytonutrients. Excellent source of fiber (5gm per cup)
Baked Apples	High water content, fiber vitamins, minerals & antioxidants – include cinnamon for additional benefits
Cranberry Dishes	Antioxidants such as vitamins C & E
Pumpkin Pie	Excellent source of fiber, manganese, phosphorus, copper, magnesium & zinc

Healthy Holiday Tips - Before the Event

- Do NOT skip meals
 - “Saving up” calories can lead to feeling hungry & sets you up to not be in control which can lead to overeating
- Eat a snack before you leave home
 - Avoid feeling too hungry when you arrive
- Be the change
 - If you’re hosting – include low calorie foods – fruits, vegetable tray, deviled eggs and lean meats
 - If you’re attending – bring a healthier option like a vegetable or fruit tray

Healthy Holiday Tips – At the Event

- Don't hang out near the food – find a spot across the room & focus on visit with people
- Survey the entire table before you starting setting your plate.
 - Decide what foods are worth eating & will enjoy the most
 - Don't waste calories on foods that don't bring pleasure
- Watch your portion sizes – do NOT cover your plate completely with food

Healthy Holiday Tips

- Drop out of the “Clean Plate Club”
 - Leave a few bites behind every time you eat – especially if you’re not enjoying it
- Eat your calories vs. drinking them
 - Stick to lower calorie or non-calorie beverages
 - Mixed drinks like eggnog and punches can add up to 500 calories per cup
- Sip a large glass of water between every alcoholic drink, non-alcoholic punch, or eggnog
 - Keeps you hydrated & you will drink fewer calories

Healthy Holiday Tips

Enjoy your favorite holiday treats & focus on:

- Smaller portions
- Eat slowly
- Savor the taste



Recipe Modifications

Alter your traditional recipes to reduce fat & calories

- Substitute skim milk & low-fat options for higher-fat products
- Using 2 egg whites in place of 1 egg can reduce dietary cholesterol and produce the same result
- Use fat-free Greek yogurt in place of sour cream or mayonnaise
- Try sliced or slivered almonds to add crunch vs. fried onion rings or croutons
- Choose low sodium broths to cut down on sodium in recipes

Recipe Modifications

Try switching from:

- Evaporated Whole Milk to Evaporated Skim Milk:
 - Saves 143 calories and 15 gm fat per 8 fl. Oz.

- Heavy Cream to Evaporated Skim Milk:
 - Saves 604 calories and 83 gm fat per 1 cup

- Regular Cream Cheese to Lite or Fat Free
 - Saves between 40-70 calories and 5-10 gm fat per 1 oz.

Cooking Tips

■ Meat, Poultry & Fish

- Season with herbs and spices vs. salt, sauces and butter
- Cook on a rack so the fat drips off
- Choose low sodium/low fat broths

■ Soups & Salads

- Use a pureed potato in place of cream to thicken soups
- Substitute beans for meat in chili
- Try flavored vinegar and olive oil dressings
- Use orange or lemon juice in place of some oil in homemade dressings



Cooking Tips

■ Casseroles

- Use egg whites or egg beaters vs. the whole egg
- Reduce the amount of margarine/butter or use a lite version
- Use fresh or frozen ingredients vs. canned

■ Stuffing

- Use low fat/lite butter/margarine
- Use egg whites or Egg Beaters
- Try chicken or turkey sausage vs. pork sausage
- Use fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- Use a whole grain bread



Cooking Tips

■ Mashed Potatoes

- Make with low-fat cream cheese or whipped butter
- Replace some of the potatoes with steamed cauliflower
- Use 1% or 2% milk or low-fat buttermilk in place of the heavy cream

■ Corn Bread

- Use low-fat buttermilk
- Use egg whites or Egg Beaters instead of whole eggs
- Cut down on the oil – add a splash of milk or applesauce



Baking Tips

- Add flax meal and wheat germ to batters
- Use unsweetened applesauce, yogurt or pumpkin puree in place of oil
- Use Egg Beaters in place of eggs
- Experiment with teff, quinoa, oat and garbanzo-fava bean flours
- Use a few tablespoons of oat-bran in place of flour to add fiber



Baking Tips

- Use oil in place of melted butter or margarine
- Choose margarines and other fats that do not contain partially hydrogenated oils
- For some recipes you can remove $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sugar without impacting taste or texture
- Toast nuts to make them more flavorful & use less than the recipe calls for

Address the Stress

- Keep healthy snacks on hand
- Schedule enough sleep (aim for 7-8 hours)
- Schedule quiet time
- Be active each day – break it up into smaller sessions like a 10 minute walk a few times a day
- Enjoy your holiday – it's ok to say no because you need to rest

Stay Active

Celebrate with activities

- Plan activities and quality time beyond your meals
 - Virtual Turkey Trots and other events
 - Ice Skating
 - Playing a game
 - Walking around a festive park or square
 - Volunteer

Exercise

- Stay flexible – you might miss some workouts but sneak in exercise when you can – like taking a walk after a large meal
- Travel & Exercise
 - If you have a gym membership ask if you have access to a national network of gyms
 - Or ask for a guest pass at a local gym
 - You can walk, run or climb stairs
 - Travel with rubber resistance bands for resistance training
- Get back to your regular routine when you get home!

Helpful Resources

- CDC guidelines for celebrating Thanksgiving this year:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/thanksgiving.html>
- Menu makeover ideas and recipes from AICR:
<https://www.aicr.org/news/a-thanksgiving-menu-with-cancer-fighting-ingredients/>

Questions?

Don't
Gobble
till
You
Wobble

