



HEALTHY EATING FOR THE HOLIDAYS - HELPFUL TIPS FOR HEALTHY HOLIDAY PARTIES

As the holidays approach, parties become numerous along with platters of rich and delicious seasonal foods. If you are hosting a gathering this holiday season and want to lighten up your offerings without sacrificing taste, you have plenty of options.

Try swapping out a few ingredients in your favorite recipes with some of these simple tips.

- Using two egg whites in place of one egg can reduce dietary cholesterol and produce the same tasty result
- Try low-sodium vegetable 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 such as banana bread. Try substituting a small amount at first, as too much may change the texture of the finished product
- For dips and sauces, try using fat-free yogurt in place of sour cream or mayonnaise
- Try sliced or slivered almonds as a delicious, crunchy topping in place of fried onion rings
- Choose reduced-fat or fat-free cheeses for salads and casseroles

Pack your shopping cart with plenty of fresh produce including 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 dinner party or other gathering, consider these tips to keep your night healthy, happy and safe:

- Try starting your day with a small meal that includes whole grains, fruit, vegetables and some type of lean protein
- Consider eating a small meal or snack before the event so you aren't tempted to overeat later
- Socialize and settle into the festivities before seeking out the buffet
- Savor foods you truly enjoy and pass up on those that don't really interest you
- Move your socializing away from the buffet tables or appetizer trays. This will minimize the unconscious nibbling



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When it comes to alcohol, satisfy your thirst by drinking water first. If you are of legal age and choose to drink, moderate alcohol consumption is defined as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks for men.

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.

A few drinks can add up easily to 600 plus extra calories. Also we tend to eat more when we drink.

Have a plan for those food pushers. Friends and family will beg you to try what they made because they only make it once a year. Have an answer ready for these diet saboteurs. Mentally rehearse a few key phrases such as, "Oh, no thanks. I couldn't eat another thing." Or say, "I will try that later," everyone will forget and you will be off the hook.

The holidays are a great time for gathering with friends and family over food and drinks. With just a little preparation, you can enjoy celebratory foods mindfully and still experience all that the season has to offer.

Lastly, remember that as we head into the holiday season, this is usually a more stressful time for many people. We mourn the loss of family members who are no longer joining us at the table. Some people tend to get more depressed during the holidays. For others, just being around extended family is a trigger. People tend to eat more when they start to feel stress. Here are some tips for getting through the next few weeks happy, healthy and sane:

1. Get enough sleep. Studies show that when you don't get enough sleep your leptin levels (the hormone that tells your brain that you are full) go down and your ghrelin levels (the hormone that stimulates your appetite) go up causing your desire to eat to rise by as much as 45%
2. If you are eating at someone else's house, take a dish that is healthy so you can have a healthy alternative
3. When you start to feel stress, give yourself a time out. Find a quiet place, relax, and take a few deep breaths. This will help you feel better as opposed to stress eating which makes you feel worse





EAT SMART FOR THE HOLIDAYS – 10 HOLIDAY HOME FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Enjoying food with family and friends is one of the highlights of the holiday season and while everyone wants to join in to help, too many cooks in the kitchen can result in an increased risk of food poisoning. Foodborne illness can cause severe and even life-threatening illnesses. Easy-to-do, safe food handling practices protect everyone in the family from getting sick.

Here are some tips to avoid common kitchen blunders when preparing meals, buffets and even homemade food gifts this holiday season.

Share the Gift of Home Food Safety This Season

Follow these simple steps to properly handle food and reduce your risk of food poisoning:

- **Defrost carefully.** Never allow foods to defrost at room temperature, on the counter or in warm water. Defrost food only in the refrigerator, in the microwave or in a cool water bath with water that is changed every 30 minutes. When defrosting food in the refrigerator, remember to cover raw meat and place it on the bottom shelf so juices won't drip onto other foods. When defrosting food in the microwave, cook it immediately afterward.
- **Wash hands before, during and after food preparation.** Proper hand-washing may eliminate a large percentage of food poisoning cases. Remember to wash hands when switching tasks, such as handling raw meat and then cutting vegetables. Wash hands thoroughly in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Keep kitchen surfaces clean.** Use hot, soapy water to wash countertops and surfaces, cutting boards, refrigerator door handles and utensils. After cleaning, keep it clean by avoiding cross-contamination.
- **Use two cutting boards.** Dedicate one for raw meat, poultry and fish and the other for ready-to-eat foods, such as fruits and vegetables. Make it easy to remember by using color-coded cutting boards, one for raw meats and one for ready-to-eat foods.
- **Employ different utensils for different tasks.** Use separate spoons and forks to taste, stir and serve food.
- **Resist temptation.** When baking, avoid eating foods containing raw eggs such as cookie dough or cake batter. Raw eggs may contain harmful bacteria that can lead to food poisoning.
- **Buy and use a food thermometer.** It is the only reliable way to determine the doneness of your food and ensure that food is cooked to proper temperatures. (Do not rely on "clear juices" to tell that the turkey is done.)
- **Refrigerate food within two hours of serving.** This helps to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria that can lead to food poisoning. This is especially important when serving buffets. Use a refrigerator thermometer and make sure it's set at below 40°F.
- **Download the Kitchen Safety Checklist.** Ensure your kitchen is ready with the tools and resources you need before the big event.



SENIOR COALITION

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Are Your Guests at High Risk for Food Poisoning?

While you should always practice safe food handling, some guests might be particularly vulnerable to food poisoning, including older adults, pregnant women, young children and people with weakened immune systems. This may mean taking special precautions and keeping certain high-risk foods off the menu.

Whether you're bringing a holiday dish to the party or preparing the holiday feast yourself, it's important to practice safe food handling and keep in mind the needs of those who may be vulnerable to food poisoning.

Take special care during the holidays to ensure that vulnerable guests avoid high-risk foods, such as raw or under-cooked eggs, raw or unpasteurized dairy products, raw fish or shellfish, raw or rare meat or under-cooked poultry.

Joy to the Leftovers

Holiday meals often bring leftovers. Perishable food should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours of serving or throw them out. In hot weather, when 90°F or above, toss within one hour of serving. Use an appliance thermometer to check that the refrigerator is cooling to 40°F or below and the freezer is 0°F or below.

Store leftovers in shallow containers (2 inches deep or less). Remove turkey from the bone and store it separately from the stuffing and gravy. Slice breast meat; legs and wings may be left whole. Use turkey within 3 to 4 days; stuffing and gravy within 1 to 2 days. Reheat leftovers to 165°F.

When in doubt, throw it out!

Other Ways to Stay Safe

This holiday season, consider how your holiday plans can be altered to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Safer Ways to Celebrate Holidays

Attending gatherings to celebrate events and holidays increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. The safest way to celebrate is virtually, with people who live with you, or outside and at least 6 feet apart from others. Host a video chat party with family and friends to share in the celebration.

- Plan a special meal with people who live with you inspired by the holiday or event.
- Watch virtual events and celebrations.

