

To Your Health

December 2008

Enjoy Tasty (and Healthy) Party Treats

Many parties are focused on food - particularly this time of year. Cookies, candies, pies, cakes, beverages of various kinds - and so much more - adorn tables. While all foods or beverages can be part of a healthy eating style, **in moderation**, make food and beverage choices at holiday parties wisely.

- **Limit** special food to the actual holiday vs. all week.
- **Be discriminating.** Eat a small serving of food you love; "pass" on foods you don't. Ask yourself, "Is this food worth it?"
- **Police your plate.** Survey the buffet before selecting foods and beverage. Use a smaller plate; take one-half the amount you started to take; by pass second helpings.
- **Go with** whole grains, vegetables and fruits.

- **Enjoy smaller portions** of traditional treats.
- **Talk it up!** Focus on family and friends.

In a balanced eating style, there is always room for reasonably sized portions of desserts and other higher fat, higher sugar foods. The secret is to start with plenty of nutrient-rich options, such as vegetables with a little dip, slices of sweet fruit, low-fat cheese, whole grain/low-fat crackers. When you look for a sweet treat, go for "small" - mini-candy, bite-size cookie, mini cupcake. Have one or two; eat slowly and savor every bite!

Happy Holidays!

Small Savings Add Up

Use these ideas to put a few dollars back in your food budget.

Beware of snack attacks

Unless you're fairly active and need the calories, enjoy snacks, such as chips, cookies, candy, etc. in limited amounts. You'll save money and may lose unwanted pounds at the same time.

Savings example: Buying one less bag of chips weekly = a savings of \$3.00 to \$4.00.

Think before you drink

Buy a reusable water bottle and fill it with tap water. Your investment soon will pay for itself. Limit consumption of soft drinks and fancy coffees.

Savings example: Drinking tap water vs. buying a 12-pack of bottled water = a savings of \$4.00

Source: University of Nebraska Extension. Prices rounded to the nearest 50 cents and may vary by store and region. <http://lancaster.unl.edu/Food>

A Harvest of Vegetables on Your Holiday Table

Piles of turkey, ham, roast beef... mounds of mashed potatoes, gallons of gravy ... piles of pie ...

There's no denying that traditional holiday meals encourage indulgence - especially when it comes to portion size. With the bounty of produce available, holiday meals can be an opportunity to serve more vegetables.

Vegetables typically in season this time of year include many varieties of **squash** and **root vegetables**, including parsnips, sweet potatoes, and beets. Cubed and roasted, a mixture of these hearty choices makes a good side dish.

Leafy greens, such as kale, chard, and spinach work well steamed, sautéed, or in a fresh salad.

Broccoli and **cauliflower** can be steamed or used fresh - in a salad or on a relish tray.

Just because a dish contains vegetables, doesn't mean that it is "healthy." Watch out for cheese-laden vegetable casseroles, heavy sauces, dressings, and dips that may be high in fat and calories.

Turkey Leftovers ...

Be safe, not sorry.

- Throw away any turkey, stuffing, and gravy left out at room temperature longer than 2 hours.
- Divide leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling.

- Use refrigerated turkey and stuffing within 3 to 4 days. Use gravy within 1 to 2 days.
- Freeze leftover turkey and use within 2 to 6 months for best quality.

Save Money - add turkey to your meals

Turkey can be added to: canned or boxed soups, stir fried dinners, quesadillas, tacos, burritos, salads, spaghetti sauce, pizza, boxed or made from scratch noodle dishes.

Stay Fit, Keep Your Spirits Bright

- A small, but growing, group of studies have shown that outdoor activities may have more mental benefits than indoor ones. So called "green" activities - such as outside walks - may be more effective at reducing tension, relieving stress, and improving concentration. So put on your comfortable shoes or boots; grab your jacket, hat, scarf, and mittens, and head outdoors for a brisk, energizing walk!
- An **active** 10-minute "time out" will probably be more energizing than a cookie break or a nap. Give yourself a 10-minute break to do some stretches or take a brisk walk.
- Is laughing a form of physical activity? Many studies confirm that laughter is a powerful "medicine" indeed, with short and long term benefits. A good laugh can relieve tension, soothe stress, and reduce aches and pains throughout the body. Almost any game or silly dancing with small children is a place to get your laughs. How about a stroll-and-giggle with a friend or family members?

Source: *Eat Right Montana* newsletter, November 2008

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