

# To Your Health

## Enjoy Tasty Holiday Nutrition

Calorie-rich treats and overflowing tables can be the norm during holidays, but you *can* get the nutrition your body needs. The key: concentrate on nutrient-rich foods. Calorie for calorie, these 'stars of the nutrition world' offer more of the vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber that your whole family needs to maintain weight, enhance health, and reduce stress during this hectic time of year.

**Start every day (and holiday) with breakfast.** For a high-energy day, include protein in your morning meal ...an egg or two, a serving of low-fat yogurt, a handful of nuts on whole grain cereal, even lean meat - like sliced turkey.

**Snack smart throughout the holidays.** Nutrient-rich snacks provide energy, while reducing the tendency to overeat at your next meal. Look for a piece of fresh fruit or fresh vegetables,

string cheese, a serving of whole grain crackers, low-fat yogurt, a glass of low-fat milk. Combine a couple of choices of a healthy snack.

**Feature festive salads at meals.** Fruit salads (any combination of canned, dried, frozen, or fresh fruit) are delicious any time of day. Green salads, bean salads, and vegetable salads add color and crunch to lunch and dinner. And they make tasty "planned-overs" for snack time.

**Pack your breadbasket with nutrition.** The nutrient-rich goodness of whole grains, nuts, seeds, and dried fruits makes for tasty breads, rolls, and muffins. Bake some at home or check grocery shelves for temptations such as sunflower whole wheat bread or bran muffins with raisins and walnuts.

**Warm up the holiday with winter vegetables.** Root vegetables (such as sweet potatoes, beets, carrots) and hard winter squash (like acorn, butternut, spaghetti squash, pumpkin) are some of the least expensive and most nutritious produce options. Enjoy them roasted, mashed, and made into soup.

Source: *Eat Right Montana*, December 2007 newsletter

## Gift Ideas

**Basket of fruit:** arrange a basket of fruit including apples, pears, oranges, and dried fruits.

**Apples in a pot:** arrange a 3-pound bag of apples in a slow-cook pot. Include this recipe - Rinse, core, quarter apples. Place in slow-cook pot with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Cook on low for 6 hours or until soft. Mash. Serve warm with lunch or dinner. Refrigerate leftover applesauce promptly.

**Large salad bowl** with utensils and dried herbs.

Source: *Food for Fitness and Fun* ISU Extension newsletter and *Communicating Food for Health*, November 2007

## Reduce Holiday Stress

Stress comes from many directions this time of year - too much food and drink, not enough physical activity or sleep, not enough money, rushing around to find the 'perfect' gifts at the lowest prices. The list could go on and on.

Step back from all the hustle and bustle. Take more control over your life - rather than have it control you.

**Eat well:** Family meals and nutrient-rich foods are more important at this time of year. Enjoy simple meals - like steaming soup with salad and rolls - together, as a family, as often as possible.

**Play well:** Being active with family members creates special memories and improves moods at the same time. Holiday fitness fun can be as easy as a family game of Twister® or a walk around the neighborhood - perhaps singing holiday songs as you go.

**Sleep well:** Most adults do best with 7 to 8 hours sleep a night, while young children need significantly more. Develop family routines that promote healthy sleep habits, like reading stories or listening to calming music together before bedtime.

The 'togetherness' of these stress reduction ideas is important. Connections to family and friends are much more important to holiday 'comfort and joy' than lots of new stuff or plates of treats.

Source: *Eat Right Montana*, December 2007 newsletter

## Lighten Up Iowa

### --worksite wellness

At least 25% of a company's healthcare costs can be attributed to modifiable health risks such as employees' poor diet and lack of

physical activity. Studies show that for every \$1.00 the average company spends on worksite wellness programming, it receives an average net benefit of \$3.40 to \$7.88.

Check out **Lighten Up Iowa**.

### Companies will see:

Reduced healthcare costs - 20-55%

Reduced short-term sick leave - 6-32%

Increased productivity - 2-52%

### Employees will:

Reduce risk of disease, premature death

Reduce or control blood pressure, cholesterol

Go to [www.lightenupiowa.org](http://www.lightenupiowa.org) for details!

## Recipes Featured

### in new ISU Extension calendar

*Food and Fun for Healthy Families* is the theme of a new full-color calendar offered by Iowa State University Extension. Each month features an easy-to-prepare recipe plus menu ideas and an activity tip.

Single copies of the 12-month calendar are \$4 (plus handling) and may be ordered from ISU Extension's Online Store at [www.extension.iastate.edu/store](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/store)

## Holiday Fun

Take a **brisk 10-minute walk** with a loved one. It can make all the difference in your physical and mental state. A brisk walk can kick-start your metabolism, too.

**Play a child's favorite active game** for 10 minutes. It's often said that holidays are "all about the children." What better way to be active than to have fun with one or more young children!

Source: *Eat Right Montana*, December 2007 newsletter