

# Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

## Be Considerate of Holiday Guests with Special Dietary Needs

With the holiday season comes the opportunity to enjoy foods we may not eat the rest of the year. Keep in mind the needs of guests who have special dietary needs either by choice or due to a health condition.



## Celebrating Holidays with Food Allergies

Holidays that revolve around food can be a challenge for families with food allergies. The traditional holiday meal can present numerous allergy risks – and the risks can be even greater if you aren't preparing the meal yourself. Is there any way around the stress and pressure of a holiday known for allergen-laden foods?

### For hosts

- Ask guests about their dietary needs. If other guests are bringing food, be specific about food restrictions of your guests and offer ideas for safe options. Instead of saying “gluten free crackers,” which may be difficult to find, give brand names or tell guests where they can be found.
- If you prefer to prepare all the foods yourself to avoid allergic reactions and your guests want to bring something, suggest holiday cups, plates and napkins, or unpeeled fruit that is safe to eat.
- Wash your hands often after handling foods to avoid cross contamination between an allergen and other foods.



### For guests

- Remind your child when being offered a food item that may contain an allergen, to politely decline the offer and say “I’m sorry, but I cannot eat \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you anyway.” Tactfully inform your host in advance of food allergies or dietary needs and the possibility that you may bring your own foods.
- In all the hustle and bustle of the holidays, don’t let your guard down regarding safety. Don’t take any chances; verify all ingredients and read all labels to ensure safety.
- Home-baked goods are a treat around the holidays, but if you are a guest with a food allergy, talk to your host about foods you can bring that are allergen safe.



## Cranberry-glazed Carrots

**Serves: 8 to 10**

### Ingredients

8 cups carrots, shredded or thinly sliced  
4 tablespoons bottled light raspberry or cranberry vinaigrette dressing  
½ cup canned whole cranberry sauce  
¼ cup chopped toasted pecans

### Directions

Add dressing and cranberry sauce to carrots in a medium nonstick saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cover pan. Simmer 8-10 minutes or until carrots are tender, stirring occasionally. Spoon into serving bowl and sprinkle pecans over the top.

### Nutrient information per serving

89 calories,  
3.7g fat  
(0.1g saturated fat),  
1.5g protein,  
16.5g carbohydrate,  
3.5g fiber,  
60mg sodium



## Get Answers on Holiday Food Safety

For holiday food safety questions, call the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach AnswerLine (1-800-262-3804) (Hours: Mon-Fri, 9-noon; 1-4 p.m.).

Other reliable contacts for your food safety question are the USDA’s Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-674-6854 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays) and Food Safety and Inspection Service “Ask Karen” at [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov). You can type in your food safety question and receive a list of questions and answers related to your inquiry.

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach

Healthy People. Environments. Economies.

## Take The Pledge

Healthiest Iowa Initiative – we're number 19, heading toward number 1. It's a bold and unprecedented goal to jump 18 ranks up the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index® in just five years, but if anyone can do it, Iowans can. Together, we can change Iowa and be part of a groundbreaking community movement that has never been attempted on a statewide basis.

**Start Somewhere**...choose your goals for healthier activity and nutrition – then just get started...somewhere! Not sure where to start with wellness goals? Check out <http://www.iowahealthiest-state.com/about/about-the-initiative> for ideas to get you started. Look under Resources/Statistics and Reports for a list of wellness tools and resources.

[www.extension.iastate.edu](http://www.extension.iastate.edu)

## Quick and Easy Holiday Tips for Special Dietary Needs

- Make gravy with arrowroot starch; it thickens better than wheat flour.
- Cook carrots in orange juice for a non-dairy flavor boost. Drizzle with a touch of pure maple syrup.
- For a non-dairy substitute in pumpkin, squash, and sweet potato recipes, try other alternatives like almond, soy, or rice milks.
- For stuffing, simply follow your favorite recipe and substitute toasted cubes of gluten-free cornbread or a loaf of store-bought gluten-free white bread.



### For vegetarians

- Add a vegetarian entrée so your vegetarian guests don't have to build a meal from side dishes.
- Explore recipes in vegetarian cookbooks from the public library or look online.

### For fussy eaters (often, but not always, toddlers)

- Find out what foods your fussy guests will eat and include one or two as part of the meal. Usually including a few plain foods like cooked vegetables, mashed potatoes, applesauce, and bread work well.



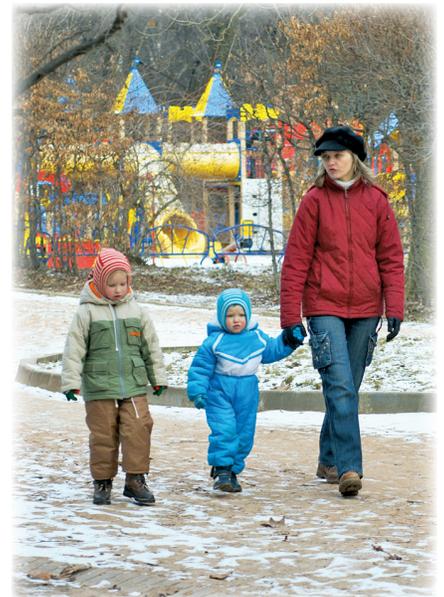
Making an extra effort to meet the dietary needs of our guests will make for a more pleasant holiday for everyone – even if we can't please everyone.

*(Sources include but not limited to: eXtension.org)*

## Walking in a Winter Wonderland (or Winter Walking Tips)

Walking is a great way to meet the 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity. But going for a walk in cold and snowy weather brings special challenges. Ensure a safe outdoor walk with these tips:

- Be aware of the wind chill factor before starting your walk. When it's windy, think about whether you want to walk into the wind when you are returning and warmed up from exercise or when you begin and are warm from your home.
- Select a route with no snow or ice when possible.
- Dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing. Wear a waterproof coat, hat, gloves, a scarf, or knit mask to cover your face, and waterproof boots. Be careful you aren't so bundled up that you can't hear or see what is going on around you!
- Use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher before going outdoors and reapply as needed. Protecting your skin from the sun is important in the winter even if the air and wind are brutally cold.
- Share your planned route with family or friends in case of an emergency and carry a cell phone, if you have one.
- Take a break when you begin to feel fatigue. Watch for signs of cold weather health problems such as hypothermia and frostbite.
- Walk with a friend! It will help keep you motivated.



PM 20990 December 2011

### ...and justice for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cathann A. Kress, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.