Healthy Eating during the Holidays

It’s true, the average person gains about 1 pound between Thanksgiving and New Years. That number increases to an average of 5 pounds if you are already overweight or obese. One to five pounds may not seem like a large amount, but year after year, those numbers really add up. If you’re dreading the holiday season because you usually gain weight during this time, focus on weight maintenance instead.

Continuous exercise helps in a weight maintenance plan, however sometimes the holiday season prevents your normal exercise schedule. If you’re traveling, try out a new gym in the area. Most places will let you try a new gym once to see if you like it (or even daily for a minimal fee). If you don’t want to pay to access a gym, consider walking outside. Also, pack a resistance tube in your suitcase and you can have a quick workout just about anywhere. Be realistic and realize that you will get back into your regular exercise routine once the holidays are over.

NUTRICAT’S TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

► Heading to a Holiday Party? Grab a light snack before hand. This seems counterintuitive if you’re counting calories, but having a light snack decrease your appetite so you won’t overindulge on fat-laden holiday treats.

► Thanksgiving and other holiday meals do not need to be all-you-can eat buffets. Try filling half your plate with vegetables, 1/4 with lean meat and the other with sides of your choice. Consider that the average Thanksgiving meal has 2000 calories (a full day’s allowance). Watch portion sizes, go skinless on the turkey, and realize that you can eat more of your favorite foods tomorrow as leftovers.

► Prepare or bring at least one healthy recipe to Holiday gatherings. This could be a vegetable or fruit platter, salad, or a lighter version of your favorite.

► Take walks with your family. This is a great time to remember why we are celebrating the season and enjoy each others company! Physical activity also promotes weight loss, healthy eating habits, and improved sleep.

► Look over the offerings before you take any food. Decide what foods are worth eating and which ones can be ignored.

► Eat your calories. Studies show that we don’t recognize the calories from drinks as much as we do from foods. Stick to water, it’s the best beverage pick you can make. Sometimes we confuse hunger with thirst; constantly staying hydrated will help you make the right decisions at the buffet table.

► If you do drink...watch your drinks! Typical drinks made with Baileys, Kahlua and cream can run around 400 calories. Try lower-calorie mixers such as tomato juice, diet sodas, or opt for wine and wine spritzers.

► At a party, hang out away from the food table. Focus on people and the night, not the food!

► Cancel your subscription to the ‘clean plate club’ and focus on the foods you really enjoy. Take a small portion and savor the taste and texture. If you don’t care for the item, leave it behind.

► Substitute higher calorie and fattier ingredients for healthier ones. Check out the swap table on the back page of this issue for ideas.

Recipe Makeover

Smashed Potatoes with Sour Cream and Chives

1 1/4 lbs. Yukon gold potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
1/4 cup low sodium chicken broth
1/4 cup reduced fat sour cream
1 1/2 tablespoons chopped chives

Place potatoes in a steamer basket fitted over a large pot of boiling water. Cover and steam for about 15 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.

Transfer potatoes to a large bowl. Add both and mash the potatoes. Stir in sour cream and chives. Season with salt and pepper.

Serves four, 3/4 cup servings.

Recipe Courtesy foodnetwork.com

Savor the Seasons Best Picks

**Squash**—Winter squash comes in a wide variety of colors and sizes. Acorn, butternut, pumpkin, and spaghetti squash are among the most popular varieties and versatile in recipes. Squash, depending on the individual variety, contain complex carbohydrates, carotene, vitamin C, iron, selenium, zinc, potassium and fiber. Try roasting pumpkin seeds as a healthy snack. Butternut squash makes a great replacement for mashed and roasted potatoes. Or try spaghetti squash in place of your favorite pasta dish. Mix it with lycopene-rich tomato sauce for a quick and healthy dinner.

**Apples**—a multitude of flavors! Apples come in countless varieties such as Golden delicious, Jonathan, Pink lady, Fuji, Honey crisp and others. Apples contain quercetin, vitamin C, beta-carotene, lutein and fiber. Head up to Apple Hill in Placerville and pick your own apples while you enjoy some spiced apple cider. Picking your own fruits and vegetables is a great way to connect with nature, teach children the importance of local foods, and burn calories! Check out [www.pickyourown.org](http://www.pickyourown.org) for a list of farm locations.

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**Learn more about: Healthy Fats: DHA**

DHA, docosahexaenoic acid, is a long chain omega-3 fatty acid. It is found in fatty fish such as salmon, trout, mackerel, tuna and sardines. It is also found in organ meats, algal oil, and breast milk. ALA, alpha-linolenic acid, a shorter-chain essential fatty acid is similar to DHA and found in flaxseed, walnuts, canola oil, and other plant foods.

Our bodies process DHA from ALA in small amounts, so consuming DHA in foods is important. DHA has been shown to lower triglycerides, heart rate, and blood pressure. A recent study showed that 1,000 mg of DHA can decrease triglyceride levels by 20%. The American Health Association recommends 500mg a day of DHA for heart protection. Additionally, DHA is necessary for brain and eye development. You can meet the recommended intake by consuming two servings of fatty fish per week. However, because of mercury level concerns, pregnant and breastfeeding women should not eat swordfish, king mackerel, or shark. Albacore tuna should be limited to six ounces per week. If you don’t want to consume fish, try a algal oil (vegetarian) supplement.

Want to learn more? Check out [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

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### HEALTHY RECIPE SUBSTITUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RECIPE CALLS FOR</strong></th>
<th><strong>SUBSTITUTION</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 whole egg</td>
<td>2 eggs whites; applesauce; mashed bananas; or 1 T ground flax seeds mixed with 3 T water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sour Cream</td>
<td>Low-fat plain yogurt or low-fat sour cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Skim, 1%, or soy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Cream</td>
<td>Frozen Yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Cream</td>
<td>1 T flour whisked into 2 C fat-free milk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>2% low-fat cheese</td>
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</tbody>
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**Lunch with NutriCat**

Thursday, December 10th

12:00PM-1:00PM

Spruce Room

Come eat lunch with NutriCat, our Campus Nutritionist! Have a question about diet, exercise, or general wellness? **Ask NutriCat!**

There is no planned agenda, so bring your friends, your lunch, and your questions; Join us for a casual and informative lunch.

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**FINAL SURVIVAL TIP FOR THE HOLIDAYS:**

Become a friend of NutriCat on Facebook!