



Holiday Stress: Eating Healthy

Holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's bring to mind thoughts of family, friends, fun and food. However, each year, millions of Americans struggle to maintain their waistlines during the holidays while surrounded by tempting holiday treats.

Holiday Parties

By following the healthy tips below, you will be on your way to enjoying all your holiday parties, while also staying in control of your eating. For example:

- Do not leave the house on an empty stomach—it promotes overeating.
- Avoid standing near the food table, a sure-fire way to overindulge.
- Make socializing your top priority; conversation will keep you occupied and away from the food.
- Limit your drinking; alcohol increases hunger and lowers willpower.
- Offer a low-calorie alternative; for example, if you have volunteered to bring a dessert, bring fruit rather than a cheesecake.
- Listen to your stomach; reduce your portion sizes and stop eating when you feel satisfied rather than stuffed.

Cooking and Baking

If you are the one hosting, use that to your advantage—it puts you in control of what will be served. For example, substitute high-fat or calorie-laden ingredients with healthier choices, such as using an egg substitute rather than a whole egg. There can also be a downfall when it comes to hosting: the temptation to sample the food while you are preparing it. To help you resist the urge to snack while cooking:

- Keep your mouth occupied with a piece of sugar-free gum or sip tea to reduce your urge to sample while you cook.
- Prepare foods on a full stomach. You will not be as tempted to taste what you are making.

Cocktails and Beverages

Before you reach for the eggnog, remember that some mixed drinks may have as many calories as a dessert. It's fine to indulge in some holiday spirits, but keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Pace yourself; drink water or seltzer between drinks. The more you drink, the more the temptation to snack increases.
- Try ice water with lemon or non-caffeinated soft drinks.
- Consume mixed drinks with diet soda, club soda or tonic when possible.

One way to avoid snacking while cooking is to chew gum while preparing the food.