

Walk
NEBRASKA

Make Your Holidays Healthier

Holidays are special times for getting together and enjoying time with families and friends. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in decorating our homes and preparing for a huge feast that we end up exhausted and too stressed out to enjoy ourselves. A few simple changes in your usual holiday routine can make a big difference in your health and happiness. There's no need to do an extreme makeover or forget about family traditions. The goal is to simply establish some healthier habits and bring the real meaning of the holidays back into focus. Consider some of these strategies that can impact your health as well as your household budget and the environment:

- **Get everyone involved in planning, preparation and clean up.** Sit down together and decide how each person is going to help with the festivities. Even young children can be given simple jobs to make them feel like an important part of the occasion. Find out what foods they would like to have and incorporate them into the meal.
- **Cook your specialties; let others help with the rest.** Prepare things from scratch that you really enjoy, but make healthy choices. Buy the rest pre-made at the store or let your guests help out by bringing their special dishes.
- **Enjoy some local foods.** Find out if farmer's markets are still open this time of year or check your local supermarket to see if any of the products are produced locally.
- **Use natural or edible decorations.** Skip expensive flowers or one-time throwaway centerpieces. Enjoy a festive basket of fruits and nuts or create arrangements from flowers you have dried.
- **Serve more fruits and veggies and smaller desserts.** Use brightly colored produce, like a fruit tray, as an appetizer. Consider salads made with greens, dried fruits and fat-free dressings rather than fluffy gelatin types. Make pie slices half their usual size.
- **Plan fun physical activities.** Move away from just watching football on TV. Join the kids outside for some flag football or shoot some hoops. Take a walk and check out the holiday decorations in your neighborhood.

Just try one or two new things this year. If you like the simpler and healthier approach you can always make more changes next year.

Source: adapted from Eat Right Montana, November 2009. www.eatrightmontana.org

Additional Resource:

<http://www.myeatsmartmovemore.com/HolidayChallenge/index.html> join others to “maintain, not gain” during the holidays

Know how. Know **now**.



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