

Walk NEBRASKA

Hints for Healthful Holidays

Although calorie rich treats and overflowing tables can be the norm during the holidays, you can get the nutrition that your body needs. The key is to concentrate on nutrient rich foods in the proper quantities. Nutrient rich foods provide bright colors and delicious flavors and are a gift on any holiday table. Follow these suggestions to celebrate the season and enjoy your favorite foods while staying on top of your goals for health and fitness throughout this temptation-filled time of year.

- **Start the day with breakfast.** For a high energy day, always include protein in your morning meal. Protein rich foods might include low-fat yogurt, eggs, whole grain cereals, nuts, or lean meat.
- **Stick to your schedule.** Missing a meal isn't wise. If a party doesn't fit into your regular meal or snack schedule, eat something small at your usual time and snack lightly at the party. Don't go to parties famished, as you will be tempted to over eat.
- **Plan ahead.** A little planning can save you time and energy as well as keep you on track for your fitness goals. If you are cooking, plan menus and have ingredients on hand to save time. For busy shopping days, prepare quick simple meals such as soup and sandwiches or use frozen entrees and bagged salads. If you are attending a party or family dinner ask questions before you go. The more you know about what's being served, the better you can plan for good food management.
- **Take along foods.** Plan to take foods to parties and family gatherings that fit into your diet and are also nutrient rich. This way you know there will be food options you can select to fill your plate while enjoying special treats in moderation.
- **Size matters.** Dish up your food on a salad or snack plate. Select one to three of your favorite items in small portions and savor each bite. If you want more, wait at least 20 minutes, and then decide whether you are really hungry or just craving more food. You can eat almost anything if you keep quantities small.
- **Think before you drink.** Choose calorie-free beverages, such as water with lemon or diet soda. Punch, eggnog, and alcoholic beverages are loaded with calories (i.e., 1 cup of eggnog contains 340 calories).
- **Make time for exercise.** When you are busy with holiday activities, you may be tempted to skip your workout. Don't fall into that trap. Exercise can help you manage your hunger, burn calories and reduce stress. In the long run you will have more energy and enjoy the holidays more if you stay active.

Sources:

Gadia, Madhu, 10 Tips for a Healthful Holidays, *Diabetic Living*, Winter, 2007, pages 40 – 42.
5 Easy Ways to Enjoy Tasty Holiday Nutrition, *Eat Right Montana*, cited 4 November 2008,
www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.html

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