

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Healthy Holiday Eating

Food is an important part of many holiday celebrations with family and friends. The foods served at these times can be higher in calories, fat, and/or sugar. It is also easy to overeat when there is a lot of food around. As a result, people may gain weight over the holidays.

With a little planning, you can make healthy food choices and still enjoy holiday celebrations.

Holiday eating tips:

Limit appetizers

It is easy to eat a full meal's worth of calories from appetizers alone. For example, two chicken wings, two sausage rolls, and one mini quiche have the same calories as a healthy meal. Choose a few items that you enjoy, and leave the rest. Visit with friends away from the appetizer or food table. Drink water or chew gum to help avoid mindless eating.

Build a healthy plate

You can enjoy holiday foods without giving up healthy eating. Try to make a healthy plate, even at a party.

- Start with a smaller plate, if possible, to help you keep your portions smaller.
- Fill at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with vegetables and fruit. They are high in fibre so they keep you full longer. They are also lower in calories.
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with grains. Choose whole grains more often (for example, brown rice, whole wheat pasta).
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with meat or alternatives. Make healthy choices such as fish, lean cuts of meat, or meat alternatives (beans, lentils or tofu).

Take charge in the kitchen

Do yourself and your guests a favour by making a few healthy changes when preparing foods by:

- Cutting back on the number of dishes you serve
- Reducing the fat, salt, and sugar in your favourite and new recipes
- Choosing healthier cooking methods, such as baking and grilling with little or no added fat
- Making enough to last the holiday not longer

Offer your guests tasty, healthy snacks

- Open-faced mini sandwiches on whole grain bread
- Peeled, unbreaded shrimp with cocktail sauce
- Reduced fat cheese and whole grain crackers
- Vegetables and dips such as hummus or tzatziki
- A fruit platter
- Baked whole grain tortilla or pita chips with salsa.

Source: myhealth.alberta.ca