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HOLIDAY

Healthy Eating
Guide



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Holiday Healthy Eating Guide

The holiday season is all about family, fun and food! Getting your family to eat heart-healthy, especially during the holidays, takes effort. This guide includes great tips and recipes to help you navigate the holiday season in a healthy way.

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Healthy Eating

Here are some simple ways you and your family can eat healthy. Visit [heart.org/healthy-eating](https://www.heart.org/healthy-eating) to learn more.

Include

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Beans and legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Fish, skinless poultry, and plant-based alternatives
- Fat-free and low-fat dairy products
- Healthier fats and nontropical oils

Limit

- Sodium and salt
- Saturated fat
- Sweets and added sugars, including sugar-sweetened beverages
- Red meats — if you choose to eat red meat, select the leanest cuts

Avoid

- *Trans* fat and partially hydrogenated oils

Tips

- **Choose wisely**, even with healthier foods. Ingredients and nutrient content can vary by brand and preparation.
- **Compare nutrition information** on package labels and select products with the lowest amounts of sodium, added sugars, saturated fat and *trans* fat, and no partially hydrogenated oils.
- **Watch your calorie intake**. To maintain weight, consume only as many calories as you use up through physical activity. If you want to lose weight, consume fewer calories or burn more calories.
- **Eat reasonable portions**. Often this is less than you are served.
- **Eat a wide variety of foods** to get all the nutrients your body needs.
- **Prepare and eat healthier meals at home**. You'll have more control over ingredients.
- **Look for the Heart-Check mark** to easily identify foods that can be part of an overall healthy diet. Learn more at [heartcheck.org](https://www.heartcheck.org).

Holiday Beverages

The winter season is chock full of delicious dishes and treats, but no one likes the extra calories and added pounds that can come with the seasonal food. Use these smart tips on substitutions and choices to enjoy your favorite winter beverages. You'll stay heart healthy and look good in those family pictures!

Eggnog

- **Mix it up.** Fill your glass with half- to three-quarter-parts of low-fat or skim milk and one part eggnog. You'll still get the flavor without all the calories.
- **Act like a kid.** Take out the alcohol. This simple step will reduce the caloric content.
- **Cut the fluff.** Pass on that big dollop of whipped cream to avoid the extra sugar and saturated fat.
- **Find an alternative.** This holiday classic has many low-fat or non-dairy versions.

Hot Chocolate

- **Skip the heavy stuff.** If you order hot chocolate at a restaurant or coffee shop, ask that it be made with low-fat or skim milk, and without the whipped cream.
- **Do some research.** To make instant hot chocolate at home, look for product packets marked "low-fat/fat-free" or "low-sugar/sugar-free." Be sure to add the mix to low-fat milk, skim milk or hot water.
- **Go easy on the toppings.** Use five to eight mini-marshmallows instead of large ones. If using whipped cream, look for low-fat versions and stick to less than one tablespoon. If you have hot chocolate regularly, try to limit the toppings to "once in a while treats" since they can pack a lot of calories and added sugars.

Apple Cider

- **Read the labels.** When buying cider at the store, check its added sugar content. Many products contain added sugars, which can increase your calorie intake and cause weight gain. Choose low-sugar and sugar-free options.
- **Do it yourself.** When making cider at home, use unsweetened apple juice and a variety of spices (like cinnamon sticks, cloves, nutmeg and whole cranberries). You'll keep the flavor while cutting calories.

Cocktails and Other Alcoholic Beverages

- **Enjoy cocktails.** Serve non-alcoholic versions of your favorite cocktails to lower the calories. Be sure to check the nutrition label, because sometimes products that are alcohol-free have more added sugar.
- **Break it up.** To reduce the amount of calorie-laden drinks you consume during a holiday gathering, drink a glass of water or sparkling water between each beverage. This will help fill your stomach, leaving less room to overindulge.

Family Meals

Sodium

- **Limit your sodium.** Did you know that many of your favorite holiday dishes may be packed with sodium? Breads and rolls, poultry, and canned soups are three common foods that can add sodium to your diet. When shopping for ingredients to prepare your holiday meal, compare the labels and choose options with the lowest amount of sodium.
- **Savor the flavor.** Use herbs and spices, like rosemary and cloves, to flavor dishes instead of salt or butter.
- **Rinse away.** When using canned beans or veggies, drain and rinse in a colander to remove excess sodium.

Turkey

- **Outsmart the bird.** Reach for the lighter pieces of meat; they have fewer calories and less fat than the darker ones. Another way to cut calories and fat is to take off the skin.
- **Keep portions in check.** A serving size of meat is 3 oz., about the size of a deck of cards. So, be conscious of how much you put on your plate, and pass on that second helping. If you're also having another meat, like ham or lamb, take smaller portions of each.
- **Watch out for the gravy train.** Turkey usually comes with gravy, which can add excess fat, calories and sodium. Limit gravy to a tablespoon, and keep it off other items, like the dressing.



Dressing

- **Call it what it is.** Dressing is intended to be a complement to your meal, not an entrée. To keep calories and excess fat in check, aim for $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (or about half a scoop with a serving spoon).
- **Judge it by its cover.** If the dressing is filled with fatty meats like sausage and pork, looks greasy or buttery, or is made with white bread or sweet rolls, it may be best to pass. Better options would be dressings that have whole grain or cornbread, lean meat (or no meat), nuts (like almonds or walnuts), and lots of veggies and fruits.

Casseroles

- **What's in it?** Holiday casseroles can be filled with fat, sugar or sodium. Your best bet is to limit yourself to a small spoonful of casserole and fill the rest of your plate with a serving of lean protein along with roasted or sautéed veggies and tossed salad instead.

Desserts

- **Treat yourself right.** The best way to enjoy an occasional sweet without losing control is by sampling a selection or two, rather than having full servings. For example, have one bite of pie, half a cookie or one small square of fudge. Find a friend or family member who will stick to the sampling rule with you.



Holiday Work Parties

Appetizers and Hors d'oeuvres

- **Get involved.** There's usually a list for coworkers to volunteer to bring dishes for the party, so sign up! You can make a heart-healthy item, giving yourself at least one good option to enjoy.
- **Come prepared.** If the party is during lunch, eat a healthy breakfast followed in mid-morning by a high-fiber snack, such as an apple or a small handful of almonds. If the party is after work, enjoy a protein-packed lunch like grilled fish or chicken with a salad and then later in the afternoon have another high-fiber snack. If you're not too hungry when you go to the party, it will be easier to avoid overeating.
- **Map it out.** Avoid loading up on foods that are fried, buttered or have a lot of cheese and cream. Even though the portions may be small, these fat-laden bites can really pack a punch. Look for fruit, veggies and dip, whole-grain crackers, and baked or grilled items.



Desserts

- **Use the buddy system.** By splitting a dessert with someone, you can cut the calories and fat in half and avoid being wasteful. It's a win-win!

Beverages

- **Mix it up.** If alcohol is being served, alternate each glass with a glass of water. This will help reduce your thirst while filling your stomach and you'll consume fewer calories.
- **Watch seasonal drinks.** Many holiday beverages have so much added sugar, they may as well be a dessert. Keep in mind what else you've eaten; it may be best to enjoy these drinks on another day.

Making Traditions Healthy

Smart substitutions for your favorite holiday meals

Baking

- Instead of butter, substitute equal parts unsweetened applesauce.
- Use a lower-calorie sugar substitute.
- Substitute low-fat or skim milk instead of whole or heavy cream.
- Instead of using only white flour, use half white and half whole-wheat flour.
- Instead of adding chocolate chips or candies, use dried fruit, like cranberries or cherries.
- Use extracts like vanilla, almond and peppermint to add flavor, instead of sugar or butter.

Cooking

- Use vegetable oils or soft margarine instead of butter.
- Use whole-grain breads, rice and pasta instead of white.
- Bake, grill or steam vegetables instead of frying.
- Instead of whole milk or heavy cream, substitute low-fat or fat-free/skim milk.
- Compare labels of your holiday ingredients, and choose products with lower amounts of sodium and added sugars.

Beverages

- Instead of alcohol in mixed drinks, use club soda.
- Mix 100-percent juice with water or use freshly squeezed juice instead of adding sugar to mixed drinks.
- Instead of using heavy cream or whole milk in dairy-based drinks, use low-fat or skim milk.
- Use spices and fruit, like cinnamon, cloves and cranberries instead of using sugar to sweeten cider.

Remember to Stay Physically Active!

The holiday season is about family and food – and all too often, adding a few extra pounds to our waists. Being physically active throughout the entire year is important to maintaining a healthy weight. The American Heart Association recommends that children (up to age 18) get at least 60 minutes a day and adults get at least 150 minutes per week of moderately vigorous physical activity. Keep your family physically active when the weather gets chilly with these tips:

- **Go sledding.** Running up a snowy hill, sliding down and repeating is a great way to get the whole family physically active.
- **Ice skate.** This is a great workout for your legs and heart. You'll also help strengthen your core, which is engaged when trying to keep you balanced.
- **Shovel the snow.** Someone has to do it, and it's a great way to get the heart pumping and the other muscles working. But don't overdo it!
- **Go for an afternoon or evening walk, jog or run – and bring the dog!** As long as you're dressed warmly any time of day can be enjoyable for taking a stroll or a jog. Winter days are shorter, so start early enough to finish before it gets too dark.
- **Visit the gym or local community center.** This is also a great way to entertain out-of-town guests. Grab a basketball, some jump ropes or volleyball for some fun physical activity!



Recipes

Snack Mix

10 servings; ½ cup per serving

Ingredients

2 cups whole grain cereal

1 cup old-fashioned oats

½ cup almonds, unsalted

½ cup walnuts, unsalted

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

¼ tsp. ground nutmeg

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 Tbsp. water

½ cup raisins, no sugar added

½ cup dried cranberries, no sugar added



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Mix cereal, oats, almonds, walnuts, cinnamon, and nutmeg together in a large bowl. Stir water and vanilla extract into the oat mixture; spread onto a baking sheet.
3. Bake in preheated oven, stirring every 15 minutes, until golden brown and crunchy, about 30 minutes; transfer to a bowl. Stir in raisins and cranberries.
4. Store in airtight container.

NUTRITION FACTS	Per serving
Calories	149
Total Fat	7.0 g
Saturated Fat	0.5 g
Trans Fat	0.0 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	3.5 g
Monounsaturated Fat	2.5 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	33 mg
Carbohydrates	20 g
Dietary Fiber	4 g
Total Sugars	6 g
Protein	4 g
Dietary Exchanges: 1 starch, 1/2 fruit, 1 fat	

Green Bean Salad Vinaigrette

12 servings; ½ cup per serving

Ingredients

- 1 quart water for fresh green beans or
¼ cup for frozen
- 1 pound fresh or frozen green beans
- 1½ Tbsp. raspberry vinegar or red or
white wine vinegar
- ¾ to 1 tsp. yellow mustard
- ½ tsp. finely snipped fresh thyme or
1½ tsp. dried, crumbled
- ½ tsp. finely snipped fresh parsley or
1½ tsp. dried, crumbled
- ½ tsp. honey
- ½ medium garlic clove, minced
- ¼ cup canola or corn oil
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. pepper, or to taste
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut
lengthwise into thin strips
- ½ to 1 small red onion, cut lengthwise
into thin strips
- ¼ tsp. grated lemon zest

Directions

1. In a large saucepan, bring the water to a boil over high heat. Add the beans. Boil for 5 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, fill a large bowl with cold water. When the beans are ready, drain them in a colander, then plunge them into the cold water to stop the cooking process and cool quickly. Once the beans are cold, drain well and pat dry with paper towels.
3. While the beans are cooling, in a separate large bowl, whisk together the vinegar, mustard, thyme, parsley, honey, and garlic. Slowly whisk in the oil, continuing to whisk until thoroughly combined. Whisk in the salt and pepper.
4. Add the green beans, bell pepper, and onion to the vinegar mixture. Toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Just before serving, sprinkle with the lemon zest.



NUTRITION FACTS	Per serving
Calories Per Serving	29
Total Fat	1.0 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Trans Fat	0 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	.5 g
Monounsaturated Fat	.5 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	52 mg
Carbohydrate	4 g
Fiber	2 g
Sugar	1 g
Protein	1 g

Dietary Exchanges: 1 vegetable

Maple Syrup-Glazed Sweet Potato Casserole

6 servings; 1 cup per serving

Ingredients

40 oz. canned, chopped sweet potatoes in light syrup, drained (or 1 1/2 pounds cooked sweet potatoes)

1/4 tsp. pumpkin pie spice, divided

1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. vanilla extract

2 large egg whites

1/4 cup unsalted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)

1 Tbsp. olive oil

2 Tbsp. maple syrup

2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Drain the sweet potatoes and add to large bowl. Using a potato masher or fork, mash well. Stir in 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice, salt, and extract.
3. Add egg whites into mixer bowl. Using a whisk attachment (or a hand mixer) whip the egg whites on high speed until firm peaks form, about 3 to 4 minutes. Use a spatula to gently fold egg whites into the sweet potato mixture.
4. Coat a 1.5-quart baking dish with cooking spray. Transfer the sweet potato mixture into the baking dish.
5. In a small bowl, stir together pumpkin seeds, oil, maple syrup, flour, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice. Sprinkle over the sweet potatoes.
6. Bake in preheated oven until sweet potatoes are fluffy and topping is golden-brown, about 20 to 25 minutes.

NUTRITION FACTS

	Per serving
Calories	249
Total Fat	5.5 g
Saturated Fat	0.9 g
Trans Fat	0.0 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	1.6 g
Monounsaturated Fat	2.0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	176 mg
Carbohydrates	46 g
Dietary Fiber	5 g
Total Sugars	13 g
Protein	5 g
Dietary Exchanges: 3 starch, 1/2 fat	

Crunchy Chicken with Oven-Roasted Broccoli

4 servings

Ingredients

Crunchy Chicken

2½ to 3 pound whole chicken
NOTE: you can save time by using boneless, skinless chicken breast halves but using the whole chicken and quartering and skinning yourself can save some money.

- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 cups whole grain cereal, crushed
- ¼ tsp. each salt and black pepper

Oven-Roasted Broccoli

- 1 pound broccoli crowns, rinsed and trimmed
- 1½ tsp. minced fresh garlic (or 2 tsp. from jar)
- 2 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 3 Tbsp. chopped unsalted nuts (almonds, pecans or walnuts suggested)

Directions

Crunchy Chicken

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Rinse chicken and pat dry. Remove giblets and neck and discard. Quarter chicken and remove and discard skin. (If you're using chicken breasts, just rinse and pat dry.)
2. In a medium bowl, toss the chicken and mustard to coat.
3. In a large bowl, mix the crushed cereal, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Coat the chicken with the cereal mixture and bake on a baking sheet until golden and cooked through, 45 to 50 minutes.

Oven-Roasted Broccoli

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees (can use same oven as chicken). Rinse broccoli, trim stalks into 1/8 inch-thick chunks and cut florets into bite-sized pieces. Place in a mixing bowl and toss with soy sauce, oil, pepper, and garlic.
2. Sprinkle the chopped nuts evenly in to a 9x13-inch casserole dish. Place in the oven 3-4 minutes until lightly toasted. Remove from oven and toss into broccoli mixture.
3. Transfer broccoli mixture to casserole dish and roast 10-12 minutes until broccoli is tender. Serve warm.

NUTRITION FACTS	Per serving
Calories	299
Total Fat	9.0 g
Saturated Fat	1.5 g
Trans Fat	0.0 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	2.0 g
Monounsaturated Fat	4.0 g
Cholesterol	94 mg
Sodium	590 mg
Carbohydrates	21 g
Dietary Fiber	5 g
Total Sugars	4 g
Protein	36 g
Dietary Exchanges: 1 starch, 1 vegetable, 4 lean meat	

Orange-Glazed Turkey with Potatoes & Carrots

6 servings

Ingredients

Cooking spray

1½ to 1¾ pound boneless turkey breast roast, skin and fat removed

2 tsp. mixed dried herbs (mix a combination of any/all – rosemary, basil, parsley, tarragon, chives, thyme, sage)

¾ tsp. salt

½ tsp. black pepper

½ tsp. garlic powder

3 Tbsp. no-sugar added orange marmalade

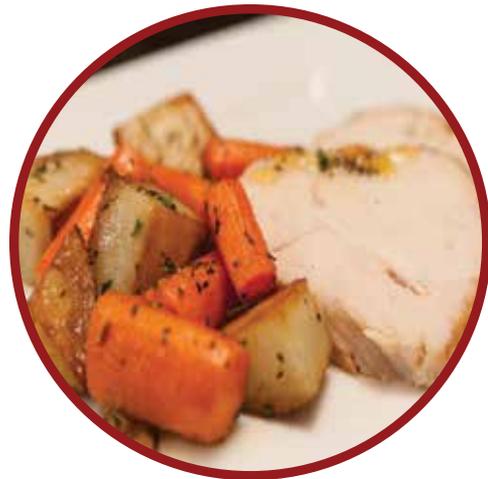
1 pound potatoes scrubbed and cut in to 1-inch cubes (can use any type of potatoes)

1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

4 medium carrots, peeled and cut in to 1-inch sections

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Spray a 9×13-inch casserole dish with cooking spray and place the turkey in the dish.
3. In a small bowl, mix dry ingredients (herbs, salt, pepper, garlic powder). Rub half of mixture over the turkey.
4. Spread marmalade over turkey.
5. Stir potatoes, carrots and oil into remaining herb mixture. Place vegetables in dish around the turkey. Bake for 1 hour.
6. Remove from oven and let sit 5-10 minutes to allow juices to redistribute.



NUTRITION FACTS

	Per serving
Calories Per Serving	257
Total Fat	3.5 g
Saturated Fat	.5 g
Trans Fat	0.0 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	.5 g
Monounsaturated Fat	2.0 g
Cholesterol	76 mg
Sodium	389 mg
Carbohydrate	23 mg
Fiber	3 g
Sugar	7 g
Protein	32 g

Dietary Exchanges: 1 starch, 1 vegetable, 4 lean meat

Resources

Eating heart-healthy and being active takes effort, and the American Heart Association has many resources to help. Visit heart.org/HealthyLiving for:

- **Nutrition Center** — Find the latest in nutrition and health along with recipes, tips and more at heart.org/nutrition.
- **Heart-Check Food Certification Program** — Check out the certified products in our program to help you find heart-healthy foods in the grocery store at heartcheck.org.
- **Find us on Facebook and Twitter** — facebook.com/AHAlivehealthy and twitter.com/AHAlivehealthy.

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