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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 ½ 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 ¼ of your plate with grains. Choose whole grains more often (for example, brown rice, whole wheat pasta).
* Fill ¼ 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**