

# **Wellness Articles**

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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