

Try these "December Resolutions"

At this time of year,
tasty treats greet us
at every turn.

We're tempted by plates
of cookies and fudge.
We might have invitations
to holiday parties.
When we bake for
our family and friends,
we may "taste test" a lot
of cookies in the process.

If the weather's cold,
we also may stay inside
and curl up on the couch
with a plate of cookies.
As we know, too much food
and too little physical activity
can result in weight gain.



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for more information.

Enjoy the food and the holidays, but remember: Overeating in December often leads to weight loss resolutions in January. Since gaining weight usually is easier than losing weight, manage your portion sizes with these tips for December:

- Curb your appetite before parties and other celebrations.
 - Drink a glass of water.
 - Have a snack, such as one of these:
 - Cup of chicken noodle soup with whole-grain crackers
 - Apple slices with peanut butter
 - Fat-free yogurt with sliced bananas



Set a holiday eating goal:

- Slow down when you eat. Remember, your brain takes 30 minutes to figure out your stomach is full.
- Stand a distance from the serving table. Spend your time visiting with family and friends. (Remember, talking with your mouth full is not polite!)
- If you're going to a potluck, be a trendsetter: Bring a veggie tray instead of a cookie tray.
- When given a choice of a large plate or small one, opt for the smaller one. Or use a napkin to gather your goodies. That way, you're less likely to take drippy foods that usually are high in fat and calories.
- Fill up on fruits, veggies, whole-grain crackers and lean meat. Have dessert last, and consider sharing it with a friend.
- Choose your beverages carefully. Most holiday beverages add "empty calories." Enjoy a special beverage of choice, but then switch to water or another calorie-free beverage.

Happy Holidays!

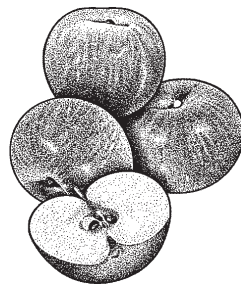
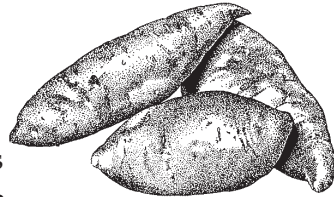
This program is funded in part by USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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Baked Apples and Sweet Potatoes

- 5 cooked sweet potatoes
- 4 medium apples
- ½ c. brown sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ c. margarine
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ c. hot water
- 2 Tbsp. honey

1. Boil the sweet potatoes in water until they are almost tender.
2. After the sweet potatoes cool, peel and slice them.
3. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
4. Grease the casserole dish with butter or margarine.
5. Peel the apples, remove the cores and slice.
6. Put a layer of sweet potatoes on the bottom of the dish. Add a layer of apple slices. Add some sugar, salt and tiny pieces of margarine to the apple layer.
7. Repeat the layers of sweet potatoes, apples and sugar/salt.
8. On the top layer of apples, sprinkle the rest of the brown sugar and margarine pieces. Sprinkle the top layer with nutmeg.
9. Mix the hot water and honey together. Pour the mix over the top layer.
10. Bake for 30 minutes until apples are tender.



Makes six servings. Each serving has 300 calories, 8 grams (g) of fat, 59 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber and 310 percent of the daily recommendation for vitamin A (as beta carotene).

Recipe source: Pennsylvania Nutrition Network

◆ Menu idea ◆

roasted chicken, Baked Apples and Sweet Potatoes, green beans, fruit and yogurt parfait, ice water

I have my grandma's holiday cookie recipes, but I'd like to make them healthier. How much can I cut down on the sugar and shortening in them?

If you change the recipe, the cookies may not taste like the ones your grandma made. They may have a different texture, too. Sometimes the better option is to leave your favorite family recipes as they are and enjoy them once a year. Make the cookies small, keep them in an air-tight container in your freezer and take out a couple at a time to enjoy.

I'm trying to cut down on the added sweeteners in my diet, especially in beverages. I'm reading food labels closely.

What are some other names for sweeteners?

Sweeteners add calories without a lot of nutrients. We all have room for some sweet treats in our diet, but focus on nutrient-rich foods and beverages first. Check out the ingredient label and look for these names:

- High-fructose corn syrup
- Fructose
- Fruit juice concentrates
- Honey
- Sugar
- Corn syrup
- Sucrose
- Dextrose

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