



Try These Strategies to Maintain Your Weight During the Holidays

Holidays usually are not the best time to try to lose weight. Often we are greeted by special treats at every turn. Try these steps to reduce the amount of calories in your diet so you can maintain your weight.

Cut Calories in Your Favorite Recipes

- Use one-fourth less liquid oil or solid fat in the recipe. For example, if a recipe calls for 1 cup, use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.
- Instead of regular cream cheese, use nonfat or low-fat cream cheese, Neufchatel or low-fat cottage cheese pureed until smooth.
- Instead of using regular sour cream in dips, use nonfat or reduced-fat sour cream or fat-free, plain yogurt.
- Bake, broil, roast, stir-fry or microwave meat instead of frying.

Snack Smart Before and During Holiday Gatherings

- Eat a healthy snack, such as an apple, orange or banana. Have some protein-rich yogurt or fiber-rich whole-grain cereal.
- Set a good example. Offer to bring the fruit or veggie tray with low-fat dip.
- Avoid standing by the buffet table. Use a small plate and make healthful choices.

Here's a more healthful version of a holiday classic: sweet potato casserole.

Sweet potatoes are rich in vitamin A and fiber.

You won't miss the butter and marshmallows!



Sweet Potato Casserole

- 40 ounces canned sweet potatoes, drained
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. fat-free milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
- 2 Tbsp. margarine, melted
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. chopped walnuts, optional

Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray a 1-quart casserole dish with cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine sweet potatoes and eggs and mash with an electric mixer or fork. Add sugar, milk, salt, nutmeg and margarine and mix well. Spoon into casserole and top with brown sugar and nuts. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes or until set.

Makes eight servings.

Per serving: 270 calories, 7.5 grams (g) protein, 7 g fat and 47 g carbohydrate

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP 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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I bought a turkey with a pop-up thermometer. Do I still need to use a regular thermometer?

Yes. That's because the thermometer sometimes pops out before the turkey reaches a safe internal temperature.

Use a food thermometer to ensure that the turkey reaches 165 F. Measure the temperature in the thickest areas of the meat, away from the bone.



I'm planning to have guests to my house for a holiday buffet. I know that I need to be careful about safe food handling. Do you have any tips for me?

- ✓ Always wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling food. Use soap and scrub for 20 seconds.
- ✓ Be careful not to cross-contaminate. Use clean dishcloths, cutting boards, utensils and plates when preparing and serving food.
- ✓ Thaw the turkey in the refrigerator or under cold water.
- ✓ Cook foods to the recommended internal temperature and use a food thermometer to check if foods are "done." Cook turkey, chicken and stuffing to an internal temperature of at least 165 F.
- ✓ If you cook food ahead of time to reheat later, be sure to cook it until it is "done," then refrigerate it in shallow pans. Before serving, reheat it to 165 F.
- ✓ Cook stuffing in a casserole dish separate from the turkey.
- ✓ Don't give bacteria the opportunity to grow and possibly make people sick. Perishable food should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours.
- ✓ Arrange and serve food on several small platters rather than on one large platter. Refill as needed.
- ✓ Keep hot foods hot in the oven set at 200 to 250 F, or in a slow cooker set on low.
- ✓ Keep cold foods cold. Keep food such as salads, cut-up fruit or vegetables in the refrigerator until serving time.

Just for Fun

What do you get if you cross a turkey with an octopus?



Here is a recipe courtesy of the University of Massachusetts Extension.

Turkey Tostadas

- 2 c. cooked turkey, cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 Tbsp. taco seasoning
- 1½ c. water
- 4 corn tortillas
- ¼ c. refried beans, low-fat or fat-free
- ¼ c. cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese, shredded, low-fat
- ½ c. tomatoes, chopped
- ½ c. lettuce, shredded
- 2 Tbsp. onions, chopped
- ½ c. taco sauce
- Optional toppings: low-fat or nonfat plain yogurt or guacamole

Wash and prepare the vegetables. In a large skillet over medium heat, combine turkey, taco seasoning and water. Bring mixture to boil, reduce heat and simmer for five minutes, stirring occasionally. Place tortillas on a cookie sheet. Bake at 375 F for four to seven minutes or until tortillas are crispy. Spread tortillas with a tablespoon of beans. Top with one-quarter of the meat mixture and cheese. Return tortillas to oven to cook for two to three minutes or until the cheese is melted. Top with tomatoes, lettuce, onions and taco sauce. Garnish with yogurt and guacamole, if desired.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 240 calories, 4 grams (g) of fat, 21 g of carbohydrate and 420 milligrams of sodium.

Menu Idea:

Turkey Tostadas, carrot sticks, canned peaches, low-fat or fat-free milk

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Contact the local office of the NDSU Extension Service for more information on food and nutrition or managing your food dollar.

