



A lifestyle approach to improving mood and wellbeing

"LET THY FOOD BE THY MEDICINE AND THY MEDICINE BE THY FOOD."

HIPPOCRATES

## Eating Healthy for the Holidays (& Loving It !)

The holiday season is a time for celebration and spending time with loved ones, and for many it involves gathering together for a shared meal. The temptation to overindulge can be strong, especially with the desserts, holiday beverages, and extra carbohydrate load many of these gatherings include. Did you know that consuming just 200 extra calories a day, consistently, can result in weight gain of two to six extra pounds—just over the holidays! But this doesn't have to happen. Continue reading this month's newsletter for some tips that can help you stay healthy and trim while also enjoying those special foods and family favorites!



## Twelve Tips to Stay on Track With Healthy Eating This Holiday Season

1. **Pace yourself.** Don't eat everything at every gathering. Choose your calories carefully, prioritizing the foods you love most.
2. **Pause before taking seconds.** It takes several minutes for your brain to register that your stomach is full. Take a 10 minute pause before going in for seconds. You may find that you are full or only want a small second portion.
3. **Distance helps the heart stay healthy.** Don't stand next to the food table. That makes it harder to mindlessly reach for food as you talk.
4. **Don't go out with an empty tank.** Before setting out for a party, eat a small, healthy snack so you don't arrive famished. An apple or handful of nuts is a great choice.
5. **Drink to your health.** Limit high calorie beverages such as egg nog (up to 500 calories per glass), wine and beer (125-200 calories per serving). Alternate with a glass of water.
6. **Avoid alcohol on an empty stomach.** Alcohol increases your appetite and decreases your ability to control what you eat.
7. **Keep moving.** If you're at a party, dancing is a fun way to burn off calories. If you are at a family gathering, suggest a walk before the feast or even between dinner and dessert. Get up and stretch or take the stairs whenever possible.
8. **Make room for veggies.** At meals and parties, don't ignore fruits and vegetables. They make great snacks and even better side or main dishes — unless they're slathered with creamy sauces or butter.
9. **Be buffet savvy.** Check out all the options before putting anything on your plate. You may be less inclined to pile on items one after another.
10. **Don't shop hungry.** Eat before you go shopping so the scent of baked goods and fast food don't tempt you.
11. **Cook from (and for) the heart.** To show family and friends that you *really* care about them, try recipes that use less butter, cream, lard, vegetable shortening, and other ingredients rich in saturated fats. Prepare turkey or fish instead of red meat.
12. **Pay attention to what really matters.** Although food is an integral part of the holidays, put the focus on family and friends, laughter and cheer. If balance and moderation are your usual guides, it's okay to indulge or overeat once in a while.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/12-tips-for-holiday-eating-201212242506>



The Food and Thought Program works to promote awareness and provide short term counselling around the important link between nutrition and emotional health. For more information or for a referral to the program, please contact the Food and Thought Program at 781-599-0110.

This work is supported by the Beverly and Addison Gilbert Hospital Community Benefits Community Grant Program and the Essex County Community Foundation Behavioral Health Partnership Grant.