

December: Holiday Food & Fitness

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During the holiday season, eating healthy and staying active can feel like an impossible feat. With all of the family and work responsibilities tossed in with holiday shopping and sometimes a lack of sleep, it can be hard to resist the temptation to indulge in holiday treats. Also, the cold weather can sometimes keep us from being active. This holiday season, pay special attention to your health and give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday food and fitness tips.



Holiday Food & Fitness Tips:



Buffets and food safety.

A popular way to celebrate holidays is to invite friends and family to a buffet. However, foods left out for long

periods leave the door open for uninvited guests—bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Remember the two-hour rule; foods sitting out for two hours or more should be discarded.



Avoid overeating. Want to take some easy steps to a healthier holiday? Don't go to holiday meals or parties on an empty stomach; eat a meal or have a light snack beforehand. Reduce your portion sizes and

take smaller amounts of your favorite foods. Skipping meals makes it harder to keep your consumption level in control and arriving hungry may increase your chances of overeating.



Healthy substitutions. Want to make healthier choices this holiday? When the recipe calls for seasoning salt try using herb only seasoning, such as garlic powder, celery seed, onion flakes, or finely chopped herbs garlic, celery, or onions. Top green bean casserole with whole wheat baked chips or use whole wheat bread to make stuffing, and give salads more color by substituting spinach for lettuce and adding more vegetables.



Slow down to slim down.

Did you know it takes about 20 minutes after food enters our mouths before the brain starts to perceive we're getting full? Slow down at the dinner table this holiday season to slim down. Take time to sit and savor the holiday food flavors. Listen to your stomach and stop eating when you're full.



Dress in layers. Unfortunately, cold weather can discourage even the most motivated exercisers. But, cold weather doesn't have to mean the end of

exercise. Physical activity generates heat so dress in layers that can be removed when you sweat and put back on as needed. You may need to experiment before you find a combination that works well for you based on your exercise intensity.



Watch out for frostbite.

This winter season don't let cold weather put a halt on physical activity. Keep hands, feet, and ears warm by wearing a thin pair of gloves under a heavier pair lined with wool or fleece, getting exercise shoes a half- or one size larger to allow for thicker, thermal socks or an extra pair of regular socks, and wear a hat or headband to protect your ears.

Know how. Know now.



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Pay attention to the forecast.

The forecast can help you stay safe and warm when exercising in cold weather. Wind chill extremes can make exercising outdoors unsafe even if you dress warmly.

Wind can penetrate clothing and remove the insulating layer of warm air surrounding your body, and exposed skin is vulnerable to frostbite. In extreme temperatures, choose an indoor activity to supplement your workouts.

This holiday season concentrate on socializing, making new acquaintances, and having fun. Spend time with relatives or catching up with old friends. Think about what you are celebrating, not just about how great the food is. Schedule time for physical activity this holiday season and aim for 30 minutes on most days. Check out food.unl.edu for more food, nutrition, and health information.

Additional Holiday Resources:

1. Food Safety App for iPhone or iPod. A new application available for Apple devices helps protect consumers from bad leftovers. The "4-Day Throw Away" application, available now from the App Store on iTunes is an extension of the 4-Day Throw Away campaign (which educates consumers about the dangers of foodborne illnesses and the four-day guideline for eating, freezing or throwing away leftovers). Check it out at:

<http://www.4daythrowaway.org/>

2. Healthful Winter Holiday Food Preparation, Food Safety, and Healthy Eating Links. Need an ingredient substitution, an answer to a baking or other food preparation question, advice on preparing foods ahead? Need healthy food ideas for the holidays? Help can be just a click away. Here are some helpful holiday links. Look for highlighted links that are also available En Español.

<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/helpful-holiday-links>

3. Tiny Tastes can Total Big Calories over the Holidays. The extra calories sometimes sneak up on us over the winter holidays. They don't always arrive in the form of large portions of calorie-laden food. Rather, they may tiptoe in through many tiny tastes throughout the day. Download the Power Point and Handout!

<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/tiny-tastes>

4. Taking Action: 10 Steps for Healthy Weight Management in Adults,

This publication describes how choosing whole grains, low-fat dairy products and other foods, combined with appropriate physical activity, can better health and maintain weight goals.

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g2085.pdf>

5. Walk Nebraska. Walk Nebraska is a unique web site designed to help you achieve a healthier lifestyle by making walking an important part of your personal fitness program. Check out newsletters and resources, trails, and track your walking.

<http://walknebraska.org/>

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