



# Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

During the holidays, there are so many tempting foods in so many locations, it seems almost impossible to maintain healthy eating habits. Use these tips to guide you.

- **Go skinless.** When dining on turkey, choose a four-ounce portion (about the size of a deck of cards) without the skin. This helps cut out some fat and cholesterol.
- **Eat slowly.** Plan what to have for a holiday dinner before sitting down. At the table, eat slowly and resist any temptation for a second helping.
- **Do not eat what you do not like.** If you do not like cranberries or Aunt Ethel's famous holiday casserole, do not put it on your plate. Consuming those calories out of obligation unnecessarily increases your total intake.
- **Eat before the party.** Do not go to a party hungry. When people skip breakfast or lunch in order to fill up at a party, they tend to eat faster. This leads to overeating. Make sure to have a healthy meal before party time.
- **Pay attention to portions.** It is possible to treat yourself, but choose smaller portions. Taste items instead of filling up on them.
- **Eat mindfully.** Take the time to taste the food and listen to your body when you have had enough. After eating for a while, food loses some of its taste appeal. If you are not aware of how good something tastes, you have probably gone beyond having enough.
- **Limit high fat.** Avoid fried foods, cheese-covered or filled vegetable dishes, processed meats, cream-based soups, pies and baked goods. Drink a low-fat substitute instead of traditional eggnog.
- **Remember there are calories in drinks.** Limit the intake of alcohol, especially beer, cider and cream drinks. Fill up on water or have drinks with water or diet mixers.
- **Know your triggers.** If it is not possible to have just one piece of something without eating all of it, do not start sampling.

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# Grateful for Gratitude This Holiday Season

Given all that is going on this year, many of us may not be looking forward to the holidays with the same excitement that the festive season usually generates. With a little gratitude, and some positive thinking, we can still get the most out of the season while also improving our overall well-being.

Everyone has times where they feel appreciative or thankful for a person or a situation. These moments of thinking about the past in a positive way give us a good feeling and are the very definition of gratitude. Feeling grateful just happens sometimes. Other times, we must make a special effort to increase how often we feel it. With so many disruptions to our usual celebrations, this holiday season might be one of those times.

## Benefits of Gratitude

Recent studies have found a host of benefits from practicing thankfulness, including:

- Improved heart and kidney function and lower blood-pressure and stress-hormone levels
- Higher levels of optimism and satisfaction with life
- Lower levels of stress and anxiety
- Fewer reports of physical ailments
- Higher motivation to exercise
- Higher levels of personal goal attainment
- Higher levels of alertness, attentiveness and energy
- Stronger emotional support for others
- Increased resilience in the face of hardship

## Ways to Increase Gratitude

Experiencing more gratitude doesn't need to be difficult or time-consuming. Try these ideas and see what works best for you:

- **Make a list.** Write down everything in your life that makes you grateful. Look at this list regularly.
- **Gratitude journal.** Take five minutes each day to think of three things that happened in your life that you are glad you experienced. Then write them down somewhere.
- **Take pictures.** Photograph little things in your everyday life that make you smile.
- **Tell someone.** Whether it's someone you look up to or just someone who makes you happy, take a bit of time to tell him or her that you're glad to have them around.
- **Frame events in a positive light.** We often joke about whether the glass is half empty or half full. Make an effort to see the half-full side of every situation.
- **Think about great holidays of the past.** Draw pleasure from all the wonderful times you have had with friends and family and think about how you will again enjoy those times soon.

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# Creating a Holiday Budget



Creating a holiday budget is necessary for setting clear expectations for upcoming expenses. To avoid financial strain, it is important to approach any situation with a plan. Although it is difficult to account for holidays throughout the year, a holiday budget can be a great tool to assist you. To get started, follow these steps:

**Step 1:** Review last year's holiday expenses. Can you spend more or less this year?

**Step 2:** Draw up a budget that includes: gifts, food, gas, decorations and travel. Add other categories as you see fit.

**Step 3:** Create a detailed plan to follow the budget. Consider cutting back on non-essential expenses, selling unwanted items for extra cash, or getting a seasonal or a part-time job to increase income.

**Step 4:** Implement and execute your plan. Staying on budget is a good way to enjoy the holidays stress-free.

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