

Top Tips for Healthy Holidays

With extra celebrations, comfort foods and treats, the holidays can oftentimes bring unwanted weight gain. Below are some tips to stay healthy and on track, while still enjoying the holiday season.



Start Each Meal with Water

Focus on drinking at least one 8-ounce cup of water before each meal and snack and continue to drink throughout your meal. Numerous studies have shown that drinking water before meals can result in consuming less calories at those meals. Water helps to fill up a portion of your stomach and provide a sense of fullness, so not as much food is needed to feel satisfied. Plus, drinking water instead of a calorie-laden beverage like soda or alcohol can save 100+ calories per cup!

Make Half of Your Plate with Vegetables

Filling half of your plate vegetables such as greens, cauliflower, peppers, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes, and eggplant can help you stay on track this holiday season. You can enjoy larger portions of these lower calorie vegetables while filling up and nourishing your body with nutrients and fiber. Fiber can help you stay full for a longer.

Examples of non-starchy vegetables to make $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate:

- Cucumbers
- Peppers
- Onions
- Lettuce
- Carrots
- Beets
- Brussel Sprouts
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Leeks
- Tomatoes
- Spinach
- Kale
- Mushrooms
- Eggplant
- Squash
- Zucchini
- Celery
- Turnips
- Artichokes

Examples of starchy vegetables to make $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate:

- Peas
- Corn
- Potatoes and sweet potatoes



Tips to Make ½ your Plate Vegetables

- Add a depth of flavor and complexity by roasting vegetables in a small amount of olive or canola oil.
- Squeeze fresh citrus juice like lemon or lime onto fresh or cooked vegetables.
- Include fresh or dried herbs and spices into your vegetable dishes to boost flavor.
- Pair raw vegetables with hummus.
- Make a dip out of low-fat Greek yogurt and your favorite sauce, like Sriracha.
- If bringing your own dish to a party, include a flavorful vegetable recipe.
- If you do not anticipate vegetables to be served at a particular celebration, have a veggie filled snack before going.
- Add two handfuls of vegetables from a vegetable tray or two portions of a non-starchy vegetable dish to your plate.

Pair Protein with Every Meal

Include a good source of protein with each meal. Protein sources like chicken, fish, lean beef, eggs, tofu, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, and lower fat cheese help to keep you feeling full and satisfied hours after your meal. Portion your protein to about ¼ of your plate, or the size of your palm. You can also include a source of protein with any snack or treat to boost the staying power.

Limit Eating When Not Feeling Hungry

When presented with large portions of holiday foods, it can be challenging not to overeat. Before reaching for a handful of chips and cookies on a holiday platter, ask yourself if you are truly feeling hungry. If the answer is no, try enjoying a beverage such as a cup of tea, coffee, or sparkling water. You may even distract yourself by catching up with a family member or friend or bundle up for a group stroll outdoors.

Check-in with the Scale

Weighing yourself weekly can help keep you on track throughout the holiday season, and the year. Be sure to weigh yourself first thing in the morning, just after waking up.

Balsamic and Parmesan Roasted Broccoli

Eatingwell.com



Ingredients

- 8 cups fresh broccoli florets (from 2 heads)
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt (or omit for lower sodium option)

Directions

- Place a rimmed baking sheet on the middle oven rack; preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Leave the pan in the oven for 5 minutes after the oven has finished preheating.
- Meanwhile, combine broccoli and oil in large bowl; toss to coat. Spread the broccoli in an even layer on the hot baking sheet. Roast until starting to brown, about 17 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with Parmesan. Continue roasting until the broccoli is tender and the cheese has melted, 3 to 5 minutes more. Drizzle with vinegar, sprinkle with salt and serve immediately.

References:

DeBara, Deanna. "5 Rules to Weighing Yourself – and When to Ditch the Scale" Healthline. 16 January, 2019
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<https://www.nutritioncaremanual.org>. 2021 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 20, August 2021.

Need a Dietitian?

Registered Dietitians are here to help you with your nutrition questions. To make an appointment call 412.692.4497 (Oakland location) or 412.623.2421 (Shadyside location).