

## Holiday Survival Tips

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Slide into a new decade with control of your weight. Don't let the "party like it's 1999" syndrome get you off track. Celebrate with friends and family, by keep the emphasis off food. Here are some ideas to help keep the New Year healthy and happy.

- Plan activities such as caroling, tree trimming, skating and ornament making. Serve sugar-free hot chocolate and low-calorie veggie snacks.
- Exercise before and after dinner or holiday party.
- Have a gift-wrapping party, and then play cards for fun.
- Volunteer to help prepare and send holiday cards.
- Do a holiday jigsaw puzzle with family.
- Learn to knit or crochet presents for your family.
- When attending a party, take a tray of vegetables and fat-free dip for the buffet.
- Bring fresh out-of-season fruit (a ripe pineapple, perhaps) to gatherings – a welcome contribution and something to eat besides heavy holiday fare.
- At parties, converse with friends away from the food table or coffee table.
- Have a family member fill your plate with low-calorie hor d'oeuvres. Skip the buttered, breaded, fried or sauce-covered offerings. Choose lean meat or cheese, fruit, shrimp, crudités (raw veggies), or pretzels. Avoid bacon-wrapped items, cocktail hot dogs, eggrolls, nuts, potato chips, corn chips, chocolate candy, and paté.
- Discuss food choices before attending the party. One option is to use your meal pattern for the dinner meal at party time.
- On party day eat lightly at other meals.
- Allow second servings of vegetables and no-calorie drinks only.
- Try calorie-free soda, sugar-free punch, or ice cold water with lemon or lime before or after meals as a "cocktail."
- Avoid alcohol, as it is an appetite stimulant. Ask for a "Virgin Mary" (spiced-up tomato juice minus the vodka).
- Develop an "allergy" to help say no and prevent overeating. ("No thanks; I'm allergic to chocolate.")
- When finished eating, hold your cup in both hands to keep from picking up your fork.
- For Christmas dinner allow 1-2 tablespoons of all the foods on the table to prevent the feeling of being deprived of a favorite food.
- Choose one favorite food and have a regular serving of this food to count as the special treat for the holiday.
- Chew a piece of sugar-free gum after the meal is over.

### **Tips for the Hostess**

- Keep calories down, flavor up, by experimenting with herbs and spices as seasonings for vegetables. Try cinnamon with carrots or oregano with green beans.
- Use all low-cal products. Fat-free margarine, cream cheese, sour cream, and cooking spray in place of traditional ingredients can decrease calories in some recipes. Use sugar substitute in place of sugar or honey.
- Wrap and freeze baked goods in individual portions so you can defrost just what you need when guests arrive, eliminating leftovers and temptations.
- Give any leftovers to friends at the end of the party.

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## **Use the following substitutions as a guideline to reduce calories in holiday baking.**

- Reduce the amount of fat in muffin or quick-bread recipes by one-third to one-half.
- Use fat-free sugar-free ice cream or frozen yogurt instead of ice cream.
- Substitute cocoa powder for chocolate in cookies or cake to reduce fat (3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder = 1 ounce unsweetened chocolate.)
- Replace heavy cream with evaporated skim milk.
- Use non-fat yogurt or low-fat cottage cheese with 1 tsp. lemon juice per ½ cup cheese to substitute for sour cream, or use fat-free sour cream.
- Substitute two egg whites for each whole egg.
- Top cake with fresh fruit, fruit sauce, or a sprinkle of powdered sugar instead of frosting.
- Eliminate nuts.

Get through the holidays "one day and one party" at a time. If you binge, treat it as an error and go right back to your regular meal plan the next day. A little extra exercise won't hurt either.

## **Following are some recipes to help make your holiday fun.**

### **SALSA**

2 med. tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
3 Tbls. canned, diced green chilies, drained  
2 Tbls. minced onion  
1 tsp. vinegar  
½ tsp. salt

Combine all ingredients, stir well. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.

### **CUCUMBER DIP**

1 small cucumber, peeled  
½ tsp. salt  
½ cup plain yogurt  
1 Tbls. fat-free mayo  
¼ tsp. lemon juice  
1 Tbls. chopped fresh parsley  
1 green onion, chopped

Grate cucumber and sprinkle with salt. Let stand at room temperature for 15 minutes. Squeeze excess moisture from cucumber. Combine all remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate until chilled. Stir well before serving.