



Nutrition News You Can Use

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Holiday Party Tips

It started in mid-October with candy corn and won't let up until the last tortilla chip gets thrown in the trash on New Year's Day. It's a waist watcher's worst nightmare - eight weeks of eating as though you're on a cruise with the U.S.S. Pig Out. This is the last (and hardest) stage of the voyage. You have made it past Halloween, there is still got another few weeks before you dock into the New Year safely.

Here are some holiday party survival tips.

Cut back on the hors d'oeuvres

Did you know that one ounce of brie cheese melted on a hunk of crispy French bread packs over 100 calories and 9 grams of fat? Couple that with a few other nibbles and you'll have to call your tailor before dinner is served. Making a meal of hors d'oeuvres is fine once in a while, but you'll need to get a handle on this part of the holiday party routine during this busy season.

Tip: Score points with the host or hostess by offering to bring hors d'oeuvres of your own. Now, here's the sneaky part. Bring something that you know you can eat and fill up on - without filling out. Take a festive basket, line it with a holiday cloth napkin, and fill it with fresh veggies. No time to slice and dice? Buy the pre-cut variety at your local supermarket. Put a small bowl of a low fat dressing in the center of the basket. Snack away.

Eat before you go

If the dinner party invitation says cocktails start at 7 pm, this probably means that dinner won't be served until Dave Letterman is delivering his monologue. As the evening wears on, even the wallpaper will start to look tasty. In this ravenous state you are likely to stuff yourself with too many hors d'oeuvres at dinner.

Tip: Nibble on something healthy before you leave the house - a plain baked potato, large salad, or a bowl of hearty soup. This tactic will curb the temptation to eat the mountain of cheese and crackers that are typically at holiday parties.

Flatter the cook

Cooks always bring out their best recipes for the holidays. The only problem is that they expect you to eat all that food. Unfortunately, cleaning your plate means that you enjoyed the meal.

Tip: Ask him or her for the recipe. Imitation in the sincerest form of flattery. Your host will be thrilled that you enjoyed the meal so much that you want to share it with others.

Dance the night away

If there's music at the party, then dance away. Not only will you move away from the buffet table, but you'll burn calories.

Be part of the solution

Be sure to practice what you preach at your own party. Limit the number of hors d'oeuvres you serve and keep them as healthful as possible. Choose fresh veggies and sliced fruit instead of cheese and crackers. Serve dinner early and choose a lean entree such as grilled seafood or skinless chicken.

Tip: When it comes to dessert, go light and go for a contained amount. When you make a dessert, make one that can only be served in individual portions. If you're having a party for eight, make sure you only have eight individual desserts. Then there's no leftover cheesecake to wake up to.

Create New Traditions

The holiday season celebrates family and friends, so make new traditions focus on being together instead of eating together. Try some of these ideas:

- Make an annual scrapbook with your children, spouse, or friends.
- Create your own holiday decorations: paper snowflakes, gingerbread houses, clay dreidels are all fun, kid-friendly crafts.
- Bond over physically active activities such as ice skating, caroling, snowman making, and walking holiday light tours.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Holiday Sweets for Children

Controlling children's sugar intake can be difficult, especially over the holidays. Natural sugars are found in foods such as milk and fruit. Children often enjoy the taste of these naturally sweet foods, which also contain substantial amounts of important vitamins and other nutrients. Refined sugars, however, are added to enhance the flavor of many foods, including traditional holiday snacks, candies, desserts and drinks. Many of these foods do not provide nutritional value and over-consuming them leaves little room for healthier food choices.

It is difficult to estimate the actual amount of sugar in most foods, but the following tips can help you identify and limit the refined sugar in your child's diet:

- Offer more whole fruit, vegetables, and low-fat milk products each day. This leaves less space for non-nutritious sugary treats.
- Teach older children to check the amount of sugar on the Nutrition Facts panels. For a learning activity, divide the total grams of sugar shown on the panel by four to find the number of teaspoons of sugar in a serving. Use this information to help make wiser choices while food shopping.
- Check to see if sugar is one of the first ingredients listed on foods. There are many types of added sugar, including sucrose, corn syrup, fructose, dextrose, glucose, molasses and malt syrup.
- Limit the number of holiday treats to only one a day. Include sugar-free or lower-calorie alternatives.



Food Safety During the Holidays

Everyone loves to eat and drink during the holiday season. But some holiday foods can be very dangerous and can even kill. The statistics are shocking, each year in this country an estimated 76 million Americans will suffer from foodborne illness and 5,000 will die. Children, the elderly and the immunocompromised are at the

greatest risk. Don't forget that pets are vulnerable, too! Many human foods can make them sick and they can get food poisoning as well.

Here are some tips for keeping the holiday safer for everyone.

-Eggnog: The best way to serve eggnog is to buy it in carton. The store-sold product is pasteurized and is safe. If you make your own eggnog, use only - pasteurized eggs and not raw eggs.

-Pies: Custard-type pies, including homemade lemon meringue varieties and pumpkin pie need to be refrigerated. If you store these pies at room temperature, they can grow dangerous bacteria.

-Candy canes: Hard candies and candy canes present a choking risk to small children. Keep these out of their reach.

-Cookie dough and cake batter: If you use raw eggs in the batter, avoid the temptation to sample them uncooked. Raw eggs can be contaminated with salmonella, a foodborne illness.

Perishable foods: Never leave perishable food at room temperature over two hours. Perishable foods include raw and cooked meat, poultry and seafood products. Once fruits and vegetables are cut, it is safest to also limit their time at room temperature. If perishable food is left at room temperature for over two hours, bacteria can grow to harmful levels.

Bonus Tip: Chocolate: Pet lovers beware! Chocolate is toxic, and sometimes even fatal, for animals! The toxic substance which chocolate contains is called theobromine, a compound which is very similar to caffeine. Baker's chocolate (pure, unsweetened chocolate or cocoa powder) is the most dangerous for pets.



Save Room For This Pumpkin Pie

Pumpkin is a great source of beta-carotene and has fiber too! It has some sugar in it but less than other recipes.



16 ginger snap cookies
16 oz can pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
1/2 cup egg whites (about 4), or egg white substitute
1/2 cup sugar
2 tsp pumpkin pie spice (1 1/4 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 tsp ginger, 1/4 tsp cloves)
12 oz can evaporated skim milk

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grind the cookies in a food processor or in a plastic bag with a rolling pin into fine crumbs. Lightly spray a 9" glass pie pan with vegetable cooking spray. Pat the cookie crumbs into the bottom of the pan evenly. Mix the rest of the ingredients in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Pour into the crust and bake until knife inserted in center comes out clean, about 45 minutes.

Store in the refrigerator. Allow to cool and slice in 8 wedges. Optional: serve each wedge with fat free whipped cream.

Serves 8. Each slice: 165 calories, 1.5 g fat, .5 g saturated fat, 1.5 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium, 32 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 6 g protein. Compare that with regular pumpkin pie (250 calories, 24 grams fat, 1 gram fiber).

WARNING! This Is Not Your Mom's Recipe

Some of my fondest memories of the holidays were preparing specialty items that only made their way onto the menu during this time. The cookbook that we used was the "Joy of Cooking," one of the country's most published cookbooks. But before you dust off some of your recipes you may want to read this --

Researchers from Cornell University studied recipes in the "Joy of Cooking." The research looked at 18 recipes that were published in each edition of the "Joy of Cooking" dating back to 1936. They found that 14 of the 18 recipes had increases in calories over time, and the differences weren't small.

The overall calories in the recipes increased by 35 percent - from 1,922 to 2,489. The calories per serving also increased for 17 of the 18 recipes for an average of an extra 77 calories per serving. Researchers say about 38 percent of the increase in calories comes from using more fattening ingredients and 62 percent of the increase comes from larger portion sizes.

Lisa Young, author of the book "The Portion Teller Plan," has spent much of her career studying how the increase of portion sizes over the years has contributed to our widening waistlines. In 2002, Young published a study in the *American Journal of Public Health* which found that identical recipes for cookies and desserts featured in newer editions of the "Joy of Cooking" specify fewer servings than editions from 20 years ago, meaning that portions are much larger. In the 1997 edition of the "Joy of Cooking" a brownie recipe yields 16 brownies, the 1975 edition recipe yielded 30 brownies following the same. This means that every brownie has doubled in size.

The "Joy of Cooking" is not the only set of recipes that have changed their portion sizes. In her book "The Portion Teller Plan," Young wrote that "in the course of just three years -- between 1984 and 1987 -- the chocolate chip cookie recipe on the back of the Nestlé's Toll House Semi-Sweet Chocolate Morsels package scaled down the number of cookies it makes from 100 to 60."

Healthy cooking needs to start at home and this involves ingredients, cooking methods and perhaps most important -- portion size. Make smaller portions of cookies and desserts than the recipe may call for; this way you can enjoy these treats in moderation. Calories can also be reduced by substituting lower fat ingredients or reducing the amount of fat in the ingredients of the recipe.

Happy Cooking!

