On average people gain 5 pounds over the holidays... that’s 20 pounds over 10 years! If you normally follow a strict diet, you may gain 2x more than those who maintain a consistent diet.

**Be Realistic:** Focus on weight maintenance vs. weight loss during the holidays. Maintenance of your present weight is a big enough challenge during the holiday season. Don’t set yourself up for failure by making unrealistic goals for yourself. Do not plan to diet after the New Year. Anticipation of food restriction can be counter-productive, setting you up for binge-type eating over the holidays.

**Remember....**
- Holidays generally last ONE day
- Allow yourself to enjoy the DAY
- Meals are not ‘All You Can Eat’ buffets
- ALL things in moderation
- Be mindful of how you feel (when you are not hungry anymore, stop eating!)

**General Rules...**

Continue to purchase healthy foods to keep at home and eat on a regular schedule. Make an effort to keep your exercise schedule on track. Enjoy your favorite holiday treats but take a small portion, eat slowly, and savor the taste and texture.

Daily self-monitoring helps! (for some people – if you find this is too stress-inducing this may not be the right approach for you)

- Pick realistic goals
- Get in more fruits and vegetables where you can
- Drink water
- Weigh yourself daily
- Monitor food intake
- My Fitness Pal or Livestrong
- Track physical activity
- Target the reductions in physical activity
- Pick daily step goals/ Use pedometer
Average Holiday Dinner...

Often the meal can exceed even 4,000 calories (229 grams fat)

The big culprits are...

- Pecan pie = 500 calories per slice (1/8)
- 1 cup stuffing = 350 calories
- 6 ounces dark meat = 350 calories
- Turkey - 4 ounces = 160 calories / With gravy = 260 calories
- Sweet potato - 1 medium = 110 calories / Candied = 305 calories
- Mashed potatoes - 1 cup = 210 calories
- Biscuits - 1 = 250 calories

Healthier Holiday Dinner options: With smaller portions you can easily keep the meal to 1000 calories (Fat: 63.45 g)

- Turkey White Meat – 1 cup diced, 276 calories
- Bread Stuffing – 1/2 cup, 190 calories
- Mashed Potatoes (Whole milk and butter added) – 1 cup, 237 calories
- Whole Kernel Corn (Canned) – 1/2 cup, 66 calories
- Turkey Gravy (Canned) – 1/2 cup 60 calories
- Dinner Roll (White) – 1 roll, 120 calories
- Butter – 1 tablespoon, 100 calories
- Pumpkin Pie – 1/8 of pie, 319 calories

Beware of the Leftover Factor

- Holidays are one day.
- *If you keep it, you will eat it*
- Only make enough to serve the amount of people present
- Send leftovers home with guests
- It will be wasted one way or the other

Use a Plate

- When eating, aim to eat all meals or snacks off of a plate instead of mindlessly munching while socializing, watching TV, or when in a hurry.
- Putting food on a plate helps you keep track of your portions better than mindlessly popping food in your mouth.
- A small plate can allow you to enjoy some of your favorite foods but you will stay in control of portions better if you use a small plate.

Prioritize Favorites

- The more variety we have the more we eat.
- Decrease the variety you are eating by only picking your 3-4 absolute favorites at each holiday event and forgo the rest.
Log your food

- One of the most important behaviors during this high risk 30-plus days is to record everything you eat.
- Logging will help increase mindfulness of eating decisions and help you keep tabs on your portions.
- Research shows logging works, so give it a try from now until January 1 or even through the month of January.

Balance extra calories with physical activity

- Try to exert some of those calories with exercise for more energy balance.
- Try to be flexible and understand that you may not work out according to your norm.
- Try to sneak in exercise whenever you can...take a walk after a large meal.

Experiment with Recipes

- Don't feel like you have to make the traditional foods with 100% traditional recipes.
- Swap high calorie ingredients for lower calorie ones.
- Make a little less so the temptation to overeat is not as great.
- Serve meals in the kitchen instead of family-style on the table.
- Put any leftovers in the fridge or freezer before sitting down to eat.
- If you are baking for friends and family, spend a little extra money and time on individual packaging so you are less likely to dip into the leftovers.

Tips...

- **Low-fat or Fat-free Sour Cream**: Use for dips, spreads, and potato dishes to cut about 320 calories and about 35 grams of fat per cup of sour cream.
- **Reduced-fat cheese** in cheese logs, appetizers, and side dishes to cut 36 grams of fat and 320 calories for every 8 ounces.
- **Greek Yogurt**: Make dips, appetizers, and side dishes using a blend of Greek yogurt and fat-free sour cream. This cuts over 1,000 calories and 132 grams of fat per cup of mayo.
Healthy Recipe

Recipe: Sweet potato casserole

Ingredients

- 2 ½ pounds of sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 inch cubes
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup finely chopped pecans, divided
- Cooking spray
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows

Nutrition Info Amount per serving -
Calories: 186 / Fat: 5.5 / Saturated fat: 2g / Monounsaturated fat: 2.3g / Polyunsaturated fat: 0.9g / Protein: 1.6g

**Disclaimer**

Always consult a qualified medical professional before changing, starting, or stopping any part of your healthcare plan, including nutrition, physical activity, or exercise. Be sure to follow all workplace safety rules, procedures and policies, and check with supervision before conducting any exercises or recommendations contained in this newsletter while at work. Rutgers Cooperative Extension does not assume any liability for injuries or health concerns arising from participation in activities mentioned or outlined in this newsletter.

2017
More Resources....

choosemyplate.gov

njaes.rutgers.edu/health

getmovinggethealthynj.rutgers.edu

Family & Community Health Sciences Healthy Recipes
vimeo.com/getmovinggethealthynj/videos
Explore our healthy recipe videos!

EatingWell.com has lots of healthy recipes.

Mayo Clinic Healthy Recipes
mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/recipes

The Food Network’s Healthy Dinners in 40 Minutes or Less
foodnetwork.com/healthy/packages/healthy-every-week/quick-and-simple/healthy-dinners-in-40-minutes-or-less
**Healthy Eating: Use MyPlate**

- **Drink in Moderation:** 1 drink for women, 2 drinks for men per day
  - (one drink = 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, 1.5 ounces of 80 proof liquor)
- **Keep high calorie condiments & sauces on the side**
- **Portion Control with Your Hand**
  - Cut calories by keeping close tabs on how much you’re eating, no matter where you are

*Maintain perspective…*

Overeating one day won’t make or break your eating plan. It takes *days* of overeating to gain weight. If you over-indulge at a holiday meal, put it behind you. Return to your usual eating plan the next day without guilt or despair.

**Additional Resources....**

- [Dept. of Family & Community Health Sciences (Rutgers NJAES)](http://www.njas.rutgers.edu/fchs)
- [Handling Leftovers Safely](#)
- [Eating Together - Eating Well: Nutrient-Rich Family Meals](#)
- Check out Cookinglight.com for more yummy recipes

---

**Happy Holidays!**