

Treat Your Family to a Delicious, Healthy Holiday

While for many the holiday season is a time filled with family gatherings and favorite foods, those who are cooking may be glad to learn meals can be made healthier without sacrificing taste or fun. Here are hints on how:

Tip 1: Swap out ingredients for healthier options—without forgoing flavor. Choosing foods that reduce calories and fat won't make your meal less flavorful. In fact, it's likely that neither you, nor your guests, will taste the difference. Here are some quick and easy food swaps to consider:

- Replace white bread with whole grain or wheat bread or white rice with brown rice.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk instead of whole milk or cream.
- Cut back the amount of sugar in side dishes by leaving off sweet toppings such as marshmallows or whipped cream.
- Use tub margarine instead of butter, stick margarine or shortening, in baked goods.



Tip 2: Keep portion sizes healthy. Family-style meals can often lead to overeating. A dinner table set with platters of food can increase the desire to eat large portions or take seconds. To help control portion sizes:

- Use smaller serving utensils, bowls or platters.
- Serve a buffet-style dinner on a separate table so guests have to get up for seconds.
- Offer take-home containers ahead of time so guests don't feel they have to eat everything "now."
- Encourage larger portions of fruits and vegetables; aim for them to cover half of each person's plate.

Tip 3: Develop active after-dinner traditions. Instead of taking a nap after the holiday meal, create a new tradition that will burn off those extra calories and promote more family fun and interaction. Activities to get your family moving can include:

- Set up a neighborhood scavenger hunt to encourage your family to find landmarks or hidden items. Motivate your family with a nonfood reward, such as a trophy or ribbon.
- Play a family game of touch football.
- Take a walk after dinner and play an interactive game such as 20 questions on the way.

For more strategies on how to eat right and be more active, visit the National Institutes of Health's **We Can!** (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) program Web site at <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>.