



## Holidays Bright and Keeping You Light Nutrition Tip December 2004

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December is a month of many themes from Bathtub Party Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> and National Whiner's Day on the 26<sup>th</sup>, to the almighty Christmas holiday on the 25<sup>th</sup>. There are some universal themes of the month, however, which include shopping, parties, presents, and, let's not forget, treats. If you are trying to eat healthfully, that doesn't mean you need to avoid the festivities. The strategy is using moderation and balance along the way. Try these ideas to keep your holidays fun and bright, and to keep you light.

- **Be Realistic.** A goal for weight loss is usually not ideal during the holidays and may be self-defeating. Weight maintenance is a more realistic strategy.
- **All-or-Nothing?** Special holiday foods can have a place on your menu and should be enjoyed without guilt. The key is in eating an appropriate portion size.
- **Balance.** If there are evening festivities on your calendar, take note to eat light meals during the day so you can enjoy holiday foods at night. Or take the edge off of your hunger by eating a snack before to prevent hunger later. Hunger can sabotage even strong willpower.
- **Greet and Meet.** Spend time in conversation and meeting new people rather than standing around the food table.
- **Keep Moving.** Stay physically active during the holidays. If you don't want to venture around in the cold weather you can walk at an indoor track, participate in aerobics classes at a local fitness center, or pop in an exercise video at home.
- **Experiment.** Make recipes with reduced sugar and fat, and use healthy substitutes, such as wild rice pilaf instead of high calorie, high fat stuffing, or pumpkin pie instead of high sugar, high fat pecan pie. To lower fat content substitute applesauce in place of half the oil in quick breads and cookies.
- **Common Sense.** Most importantly, eat your favorite foods and enjoy the holiday season. Remember holiday foods can be on your menu as long as moderation is in your mind.

(Source: American Dietetic Association [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org))