

# Healthy for the Holidays

## REDUCE CALORIES, HOLIDAY STRESS, AND FEEL HEALTHIER.

The holidays can be a great time to reflect on the year and share quality time with friends and family. Due to busy schedules and traveling, it can be hard to stick to our normal health maintenance routine. There are a lot of ways that we can stay healthy and active during the holidays. Here are 9 tips to have a happy and healthy holiday:

1. **Use APPLESAUCE or BANANAS instead of BUTTER or OIL.** This tip helps reduce calories by reducing sugar and saturated fat. Also adds fiber or potassium. Can be substituted 1:1 for oil and butter. **Tip:** If using applesauce or bananas in place of sugar, cut down on the amount of milk or water.
2. **Try MASHED CAULIFLOWER instead of MASHED POTATOES.** Cauliflower has the same look and consistency as potatoes, but fewer carbs. You can buy a head of cauliflower, frozen pre-cut. Boil until it can easily be mashed and use in place of potatoes in your favorite mashed potato recipe. If you are not ready to sacrifice your potatoes, use half the amount of potatoes and substitute the other half with cauliflower. This is an easy way to add more vegetables to your plate.
3. **LESS FAT= HAPPY HEART.** Use nonfat plain yogurt instead of sour cream or mayonnaise. Yogurt has more protein, fewer calories and fat, while still having a similar consistency and taste as sour cream and mayo.
4. **SPICE IT UP.** Using spices or herbs instead of cream, butter and salt to flavor your food can be a healthy, tasty way to reduce calories, fat and sodium. Parsley, rosemary, garlic, or thyme are a few tasty alternatives. Mrs. Dash is a great mix of herbs and spices and can be found in your local grocery store.
5. **DO-IT-YOURSELF "BETTERMILK".** You can make your own healthier buttermilk by adding a tablespoon of lemon juice, white vinegar, or apple cider vinegar to every cup of milk in a recipe. Pour vinegar or juice in measuring cup first and then fill with skim or non-dairy milk. Let it sit for 5-10 minutes until the milk curdles and you have your very own bettermilk!
6. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO COOK EVERYTHING.** A simple salad with veggies, fruit and nuts can be a welcome break to many of the heavier holiday dishes. Not to mention, you won't have to compete for oven or stove time! Having some apple slices and carrot sticks on hand while preparing food can be a good snack alternative, instead of nibbling on other less healthy ingredients.
7. **TAKE A BREATH.** During the holidays, it can be difficult for many to take time for themselves. It's important that we all take a short time for ourselves, whether this is an early morning walk, a cup of coffee or tea by yourself, or quiet time with a book or craft. A little time to yourself will go a long way and help you feel a little more 'on' the rest of the day.
8. **IT'S OKAY.** Sometimes the turkey is a little overcooked, you didn't have time to decorate, or you weren't able to get to everything you had hoped. It's okay. Don't stress over what you can't control. Be realistic with yourself and others about what you are able to do. Don't be afraid to say no to things that you know might add stress or that will somehow make you unable to enjoy your time.
9. **WE ALL NEED SOMEBODY TO LEAN ON.** The holidays can be tough sometimes. Have a support system, such as friends or family that you feel comfortable talking to about how you are feeling. It's okay if you don't feel the way you're *supposed* to feel or filled with the holiday spirit. If you notice a loved one having a hard time, reach out to them and listen. If it's more than you or others can handle, don't be afraid to reach out to a mental health professional.

**Simple (and cheap) substitutions that can lower the calories and fat in some of your favorite recipes.**