

# Celebrate the Season Without Maxing Out Calories!



*Christmas and New Years are times of celebration but can also be times of high-fat, high-caloric food. Enjoying holiday celebrations while maintaining health goals is definitely doable! The key to is to have a plan and stick to it. Consider the following suggestions to stay on track:*

## **Start with a Healthy Breakfast**

Eat a healthy breakfast on busy holiday mornings. Include at least one fruit or vegetable and some protein such as eggs or nuts. This will help stave off hunger and prevent you from overeating high-calorie snacks while waiting for the big lunch or dinner to be served.

## **Eating with Friends? Contribute to the Holiday Meal**

Bring a healthy and balanced dish to the festivities. Offer beforehand to provide a salad or vegetable side dish so you can be assured that there will be at least one healthy item that you can select. Looking for healthy holiday recipes? Check out [www.therightchoiceforahealthieryou.com](http://www.therightchoiceforahealthieryou.com).

## **Exercise Early**

If possible, exercise when you first get up in the morning (kettle bell swings, wall sits, planks, etc.) before eating any breakfast. This allows you to burn stored body fat instead of burning through the calories you would have eaten at breakfast, and the exercise revs up your metabolism, which allows you to burn more calories throughout the day.

## **Be Realistic**

Do you have a health goal to maintain your weight over the holidays? Being realistic about holiday temptations makes your long-term health goals more attainable. The average person only gains about a pound during the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. That's no excuse to eat with abandon, though. If you do overeat on holiday treats, forgive yourself and start fresh the next day.

## **Portion Control**

Instead of using a large dinner plate, chose a smaller one, if possible. Studies have shown that a smaller plate can influence you to choose smaller portions of food. Fill your plate with healthy options first. Rather than heading straight for the high-calorie side dishes, choose lean meats, fruits, and vegetables first, then you can choose smaller servings of higher-calorie foods when you are ready for seconds or desserts and are already somewhat full.

When faced with a buffet or table loaded with high calorie desserts, you don't have to deny yourself all of the treats. Choose one or two of your favorites and follow the 3-bite rule: the first bite is delicious, the second bite confirms the flavor, but by the third bite, the flavor fades so—stop. Eating just a few bites gives you the chance to try the yummy calorie-rich desserts without feeling deprived, guilty, or stuffed.

Another option is to enjoy a cup of tea, low calorie hot chocolate, or even a small glass of red wine in place of dessert. The liquid will fill you up, making it less likely that you will overeat on cake, pie, and candies.

### **Lighten up your calories in holiday cooking using these substitutions**

<i>If your recipe calls for this:</i>	<i>Try this instead:</i>
Bacon	Canadian or turkey bacon
Butter, margarine, oil	Applesauce or pureed fruit (any variety)
Cream	Fat-free half and half, evaporated skim milk
Cream cheese	Low fat cottage cheese pureed until smooth
Eggs	Two egg whites or egg substitute
Mayonnaise	Greek Yogurt or reduced-calorie salad dressing
Oil-based marinades	Wine, balsamic vinegar, or vegetable broth
Salt or seasoning salt	Garlic powder, onion powder, or fresh herbs



# A Festive Treat...

## Pecan-Topped Pumpkin Bread



### INGREDIENTS

3 1/3 cups all-purpose flour (about 15 ounces)  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
2 cups granulated sugar  
1/2 cup egg substitute  
1/2 cup canola oil  
1/2 cup low-fat buttermilk  
2 large eggs  
2/3 cup water  
1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin  
Cooking spray  
1/3 cup chopped pecans

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour and next 6 ingredients (through allspice) in a bowl. Place sugar, egg substitute, oil, buttermilk, and eggs in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until well blended. Add 2/3 cup water and pumpkin, beating at low speed until blended.

Add flour mixture to pumpkin mixture, beating at low speed just until combined. Spoon batter into 2 (9 x 5-inch) loaf pans coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle pecans evenly over batter. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes in pans on a wire rack; remove from pans. Cool completely on wire rack.

*(recipe source: [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com))*

