

ask the experts

Our Experts on Skincare During
Pregnancy, Teen Dating,
and Feasting, Not Fattening



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Feasting, Not Fattening

Q

All Ages

My family loves to feast during the holidays, myself included, but we always gain a few pounds, and then I feel guilty because I do all the cooking. Any advice on how to feast and gain the least?

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Staying healthy once the holiday season begins can be a challenge, but it doesn't have to be! With just a few simple changes, the whole family can enjoy holiday food traditions without the post-meal guilt.

The most important thing to remember when planning a holiday meal is to not cook for an army. We all tend to overestimate and plan for leftovers, but at the end of the day the biggest complaint is that we ate too much. This year, confirm how many people will be attending your holiday meal and plan for just one more. For store-bought ingredients, such as turkey and ham, use the suggested serving size on nutrition labels as your guide in preparing recipes.

If a recipe is part of a family tradition, as many of the best recipes tend to be, it won't have nutritional info; in this case, a good portion size to plan for is half a cup per person. Plating food before it hits the table will also ensure that everyone receives only one serving and reduces the ease of overeating.

Additionally, you can use holiday meal preparation as an opportunity to get the family involved: show kids the different vegetables being included in the special meal and include them in the selection process. When kids have a chance to be part of the shopping and take part in the preparation, they are often more willing to try different types of healthy dishes and enjoy them when meal time comes around.

Since variety is key to serving a healthy holiday meal, here a few helpful tips as you get ready to tackle the big day:

- Don't stuff a turkey with the dressing, since stuffing absorbs fat. Bake it in a separate casserole dish instead.
- Sauté onions and celery in a small amount of margarine (1 tbsp) and use chicken broth for additional moisture.
- Since the holidays are a special time of the year, splurge on purchasing fresh produce—fresh veggies not only taste better but provide colors and nutrients that make a difference on the table and in our bodies.
- Mash the potatoes with chicken broth and evaporated skim milk. Hold the butter—no one will notice!
- Use pineapple and/or orange juice thickened with cornstarch as a glaze for carrots or sweet potatoes with a pinch of cinnamon.