

7 Habits for Healthy Holidays

In this issue:

1. 7 Habits for Healthy Holidays
2. Smart Starch Food Safety
3. Staying Balanced During the Holiday Season
4. Garlic Mashed Potato Recipe

The holiday season is upon us. It's the time of the year to enjoy celebrating and spending time with family and friends. For many people, it's also the time of the year that disrupts schedules and interrupts progress toward health goals.

This year, make a change by following these seven simple habits for healthy holidays.

HABIT 1 - Create a Plan . This year, rather than allowing the season to disrupt goals, be proactive, identify challenges in advance, and create a plan, preferably a written one, to ensure success.

HABIT 2 - Eat Better, Not More. Eat only when physically hungry, and choose smaller portions of the special holiday favorites. The goal is to stop at satisfied, not stuffed.

HABIT 3 - Indulge Yourself. Deprivation never works, so plan for indulgences. Perhaps, give up something that is less enjoyable to allow for the most enjoyable treats.

HABIT 4 - Challenge Yourself. Setting a goal to eat at least five servings of vegetables and fruit each day can ensure healthier food choices

throughout the season.

HABIT 5 - Create Something New. Make one small change this year. All traditions were the new kid on the block at one time. Perhaps, add a tag football game to the itinerary or add one healthy recipe this year. It's an excellent opportunity to lead by example.

HABIT 6 - Reinvent Something Old. Modifying old traditions can be a way to stay on track with health goals during the holiday season. ie. Trekking into the forest to chop down a tree rather than purchasing from a lot.

HABIT 7 - Keep First Things First. One of the biggest disruptors to health goals during the holiday season is stress. Once the plan is in place, focus on the celebration with family and friends. That's what is truly important. And, always remember the goal is better, not perfect.



Source: orthocarolina.com

Smart Starch Food Safety

Potatoes are among some of the most common left over food items, especially during the holiday season. Be sure you're storing and reheating all of your leftovers safely before reserving them to friends and family. According to the 2017 Potato Statistical Yearbook created by the National Potato Council, 44 billion pounds of potatoes were produced in the U.S. in 2015. Some of those were turned into potato chips, others French fries. Many potatoes were baked or boiled and then served in restaurants, catering, healthcare and other foodservice operations. And surprisingly, cooked potatoes pose a food safety risk, because they are considered a Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food. TCS foods, like cooked potatoes, are prone to bacteria growth because they are moist, contain protein and have a neutral or slightly acidic pH. This is ideal for the growth of microorganisms and production of toxins. Proper cooking, holding times and cooling techniques are imperative to avoiding time-temperature abuse and keeping TCS foods safe. If cooked potatoes are not cooled properly, they can easily enter the temperature danger zone. Additionally, cooled potatoes are often combined with mayonnaise or oil to make potato salads, which makes them even more of a breeding ground for bacteria like salmonella or listeria when proper temperatures aren't maintained.

3 Ways To Prevent Potato-Related Food Hazards

- 1. Cool Off.** Cooling potatoes properly is the best way to avoid a foodborne illness outbreak. Cooling potatoes in the refrigerator takes a minimum of 4 hours, but it can be expedited with these methods: Ice-water bath, Ice paddle, Blast or tumble chiller, or Divide large batches of potatoes into shallow pans and spread them out.
- 2. Serve Safely.** If cooked potatoes are being reheated, make sure they reach at least 165°F. If the potatoes are being used in a ready-to-eat cold dish, like a potato salad, make sure the dish is served below 41°F. Tip: Place clean ice packs in or around the dish or use an ice-water bath to keep things safely cool.
- 3. If in doubt, throw it out!** Any food that has been in the temperature danger zone of 41-135°F for more than 4 hours should be discarded. If you aren't sure how long potatoes have been at 41-135°F, it is better to toss them than risk serving them to your customers, friends or family.

The Difference Between Starchy vs. Waxy Potatoes

Russet potatoes are called starchy because they contain more of a certain kind of starch that makes them cook up drier and fluffier. That's why they're ideal for soaking up butter and gravy when they're baked or mashed. But that same fluffy texture makes them fall apart in stews.

Boiling potatoes and fingerlings are called waxy because they hold their shape when they're cooked. Firm rather than fluffy, their texture can stand up to the moisture in soups (and casseroles without disintegrating).

All-purpose potatoes are like the Goldilocks of the potato world. Their balance of starchiness and waxiness makes them just right for almost any recipe.



Source: dinnertonight.tamu.edu

Staying Balanced During the Holiday Season

The holiday season that spans from November through early January is a wonderful time of year where the focus is on family, friends, and often delicious food and drink. But after all this festiveness, January can often bring the post-holiday blues. This year we have the additional stress of the COVID-19 pandemic that might be changing many families' well-loved traditions. To avoid this January slump, take a little time now to think about what is important to you and your overall wellbeing for the long term. Start by practicing better self-care during holidays, the good thing about self-care is that it pays off. To nurture yourself, assess your atmosphere and see how it feels, then you can add uplifting things like lighting, scents, or music. With national and religious holidays that either focus on foods or have many food-based traditions, it can be easy to overeat during this season. Turkey, pies, sugar and butter cookies, latkes, and eggnogs will surely be around this time of year. These celebratory foods and drinks are a way of marking the season and showing our loved ones we care. While these foods and drinks taste good in the moment, they are usually high in fat, sugar, and/or sodium and can leave us feeling sluggish in the days after we eat them. Our digestion can be disrupted, and our healthy routines can get knocked off course. Some common holiday obstacles and some creative solutions to overcome them this season include:

1. **Overeating:** This is probably the most common challenge during the holiday season. While you do not need to avoid your favorite holiday treats entirely, it is a good idea to moderate your intake. You could think about your favorite few dishes and focus on enjoying those instead of loading your plate with every option from the buffet. Instead of deprivation, focus on healthy additions. Start the day with a healthy breakfast of whole grain oatmeal and fresh fruit for some healthy fiber and vitamins. If you are planning to have a smaller celebration with just your immediate family or a few friends, consider serving nutrient-dense appetizers such as a vegetable platter with a dip made from Greek yogurt like loaded Tzatziki sauce.
2. **Too Much Alcohol:** Drinking too much can lead to poor judgment, feeling flooded with emotions, depression, or other health problems. It can be hard to say no to another glass of wine when others are indulging. If you chose to drink alcohol, be sure to drink twice as much water

between each drink. This will help to keep you hydrated as well as slowing down your consumption. If you would prefer not to drink but don't like being left with only water or kids' drinks as an option, a "mocktail" could be a welcome option. You can create a celebratory drink that is alcohol-free and lower in calories while still feeling festive and enjoying the moment.

3. **Increased sedentary time:** While most of us like to sit down to a football game after Thanksgiving dinner, it is easy to get stuck indoors in the cooler months. Instead of creating a new dent in the sofa, try to create some new family traditions. Perhaps a winter hike or a family ice skating trip. These outdoor holiday pastimes can be more easily adapted to social distancing if you would like to spend time safely with friends or extended family. Have a holiday craft night where the activity is making ornaments or small gifts instead of baking and eating cookies. Go for a post meal walk to admire your neighbors' holiday decorations from a safe distance. There are many ways to be active and festive and to continue to enjoy the outdoors even into the winter months.
4. **Not enough time for yourself:** Having so much time dedicated to family and creating a festive atmosphere can be overwhelming and we may find ourselves exhausted at the end of the holiday season. Even with the spirit of giving in the air, we can be generous with ourselves and allow small windows of time to reflect with gratitude on the wonderful gifts in our lives. Do not feel badly declining an invite to a party if you don't feel safe or if you need a little quiet time for yourself or your smaller family. Pay attention to the signals your children are sending. They could be feeling overwhelmed as well and modeling healthy boundaries is a great way to show them how to handle situations that can become overstimulating.

By incorporating even just a few of these strategies you will arrive in the new year ready to continue your healthy behaviors rather than starting all over from square one, or even worse becoming ill from an unsafe social gathering. Building on small behavior changes for the long run will help you to accomplish your overall wellness goals throughout the year. Wishing you a festive, safe, and healthy holiday season.

Source: extension.psu.edu



Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Servings 6 1/2 cup servings



Ingredients

- 2 pounds Yukon Golden Potatoes peeled, cut into 1 inch rounds
- 3 cloves garlic peeled
- 1 cup low sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup low-fat Greek Yogurt
- 1 Tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

Instructions

1. Peel and rinse potatoes, cut into 1-inch size rings.
2. Arrange potato pieces at the bottom of the multi-function cooker/instant pot in an even layer. Add whole garlic and chicken broth over the potatoes.
3. Close the lid of your cooker. Set the steam release valve to a sealed position.
4. Press MANUAL or PRESSURE COOK button for 12 minutes on HIGH PRESSURE.
5. Quick-release after the alarm sounds. Carefully remove the lid.
6. Mash the potatoes and garlic together. Add yogurt, butter, salt and pepper.

Combine well

Source: dinnertonight.tamu.edu

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
Serving size	1/2 cup (161g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 2.5g	3%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 10mg	3%
Sodium 220mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 19g	7%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 2g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 4g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 38mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 490mg	10%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



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