KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension Wildcat District

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For more information contact: Arianna Oehme
Nutrition & Community Wellness Agent, Wildcat Extension District
aoehme@ksu.edu, (620)724-8233

Healthier Holiday Meals

Tis' the season for holiday get-togethers and festive foods. It's common to indulge in all the sweet and savory flavors shared during the season. If you are trying to be mindful of your health while still enjoying your favorite holiday dishes, here are some tips for creating healthier holiday meals.

Reduce sugar and fats: You can easily halve the amount of fat or sugar called for in a recipe to reduce calories.

- Use half the called for amount of butter and substitute the difference with coconut oil, unsweetened applesauce, or pumpkin purée.
- Use half of the called for amount of sugar or use an alternative natural sweetener like maple syrup or honey.
- If your recipe calls for cheese, use half of the called amount. Try using a pungent cheese like sharp cheddar or parmesan, as these cheeses tend to have a stronger flavor, allowing you to use less.

Swap for high fiber grains:

- Look for whole wheat or whole grain options when selecting bread products or pasta.
- Use brown rice or wild rice rather than white rice.

Leave out extra ingredients:

- Leave out ingredients like mayonnaise or jelly unless you are using options made from scratch.
- Cut down on heavily processed ingredients such as frosting or chips.

Pay attention to your portion size:

- If the dish you are eating is high in fats and sugar, simply reduce your portion size.
- The USDA offers guidance in creating a well-rounded plate with half your plate being fruits and vegetables, a quarter grain, a quarter protein, and incorporating some dairy in there as well.

Eating healthy can be a challenge over the holidays, so don't stress yourself trying to maintain the "perfect" diet. You can stay healthy and still enjoy all your holiday favorites.

For more information, visit https://www.myplate.gov OR contact Arianna Oehme, Wildcat Extension District Nutrition & Community Wellness Agent at aoehme@ksu.edu or (620)724-8233.

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