

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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 but still want to enjoy your favorite holiday dishes, here are some useful tips for creating healthier holiday meals.

Reduce sugar and fats: You can easily half 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 Perkins, Wildcat Extension District Health & Nutrition Program Assistant at aoehme@ksu.edu or (620)724-8233.

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