



# Healthy holidays

## Create a peaceful holiday season

The holiday hustle and bustle can challenge your sense of well-being. A little preparation can help you create a peaceful festive season. **Here's how to do it.**

- **Stick to your normal routine.** Continue to do your workouts, get enough sleep and make healthy food choices. One day — or a few days — of unhealthy choices doesn't mean you should give up for the whole season. Get yourself back on track and keep trying.
- **Wash your hands.** This is a simple self-care tip that can help keep illness away. You are in contact with more people during the holidays, so you are exposed to more germs.
- **Be realistic about your spending.** Consider cutting back on the list of those you buy for or setting a spending limit. Come up with creative alternatives to exchanging gifts — like doing an activity with friends or family or donating to a charity.
- **Learn to say “no, thanks.”** You don't have to go to every party. Accept invitations to events that are meaningful to you.
- **Beat the blues.** Get the support you deserve if you've suffered a loss. Make plans with friends if family is far away. Give yourself something to look forward to by putting activities on your calendar for the future.
- **Be thankful.** Even if you are facing challenges, try to remember to be grateful. Helping someone who is less fortunate is a good reminder of what you have.
- **Live in the moment.** The holidays are here for only a short time, so try to be present for the joyful moments. And practice self-compassion during the difficult ones.

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# Holiday eating tips

You can control the feeding frenzy that accompanies the holidays by planning ahead.

- **Try not to skip meals.** It is best to eat normally throughout the day rather than trying to “save up” calories to splurge on one meal.
- **Eat a healthy snack before going to a party.** Taking the edge off your hunger will make it easier for you to control your eating choices when you are at the party.
- **Choose a salad with dressing on the side before the main course.** Select lean protein sources for your meal, such as grilled chicken or fish.
- **Scan the buffet table before filling your plate.** Then choose only your favorites and balance healthy vs. less healthy options.
- **Bring a healthy dish to share as a safety measure.** This way you know you will have something to eat that is a healthy choice.
- **Drink alcohol in moderation.** Alcohol is high in calories and it stimulates the appetite while decreasing willpower.

A few easy swaps can make your holiday table even healthier.

Swap this ...	For this
Sugar and salt	Your favorite spices and herbs — think sweet with cinnamon, savory with thyme; cut down sugar called for by up to half
Heavy cream	Fat-free evaporated milk
Sweetened condensed milk	Low-fat vanilla yogurt
White flour	Whole-grain wheat flour
Butter or oil	Mashed bananas or applesauce

**Stay healthy during the holidays** — get on the path to a healthier you.

Source: Healthwise, Incorporated. Available at [www.healthwise.net/aetna](http://www.healthwise.net/aetna). Accessed 1 March 2017.

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