

Winter 2016

# Health Wise

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# Healthy Eating:

## Tips for beating holiday weight gain

By Diane Zakrajsek

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The holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends and of course, eat your favorite foods. For many, it is a time of added stress leading to over-eating and weight gain. The holidays don't have to mean tipping the scales.

The average American consumes over 4,500 calories during a traditional holiday meal. This not only leads to a potential weight gain of approximately one to two pounds during the holidays, but can also contribute to not feeling your best. By being mindful and following a few simple tips, you can eat the foods you enjoy and stay healthy.

**Know your daily nutritional budget.** If you know your budget, you know how much you can spend and decide how you want to spend it. Ask yourself these questions. What is the appropriate serving size or portion? How do I want to spend my nutritional budget? Do I really want to use up my budget on this food? Am I eating mindfully?

**Watch your portions.** Cutting portions can save calories. A portion is how much food you eat during a meal or snack. You can enjoy all types of food simply by decreasing portions.

**Do not skip meals.** Skipping meals may result in overeating later in the day. Research shows that people who skip meals tend to consume more calories throughout the day. It is important to eat nutritional foods and snacks to nourish your body.



**Modify unhealthy recipes to make them healthier.** If you are the host or asked to bring a dish to a holiday gathering, be the example and bring a healthy dish. Reduce simple carbohydrates and unhealthy fats, cook leaner and make smaller portions.

**Share your favorite treats or entrée with someone.** Splitting a dessert or large entrée will help you cut down on the portion size, save calories, reduce carbohydrates and cut down on unhealthy fats. It can also save money and help you feel better.

**Slow down and enjoy your food.** Pay attention to what you are eating and drinking. The faster we eat, the less time our body has to register fullness. Eat slower and enjoy every bite.

**Limit calorie-heavy, nutrient-deficient foods.** These foods are considered empty calorie foods because they provide calories with little or no nutritional value. These can include sugar-sweetened beverages, processed foods, condiments, sauces and high-calorie foods such as desserts. The key is to limit the amount of empty calorie foods you eat, not to avoid them altogether.

**Harness the power of produce.** Fill half of your plate with simple vegetables and fruit. You will fill up on nutrient-dense foods that are higher in fiber, rich in vitamin and minerals and low in calories.

**Watch added sauces, gravy, butter and cheese.** Calories can add up fast with sauces. Most of the time, we are happy with a small amount of condiments or side sauces.

**Limit alcohol and empty calorie mixers.** Alcoholic drinks are typically high in calories with no nutritional value. It is ok to drink as long as you do not overindulge. Substitute mixers with low calorie beverages such as sparkling soda, club soda or low calorie punch. Limiting your serving size is also important. For example, a serving of wine is 5 ounces.

**Be active.** A simple tip is to eat less and move more. Exercise is beneficial anytime of the year and can help you maintain or lose excess weight and stay healthy. Exercise also relieves stress.

*The best gift you can give yourself this holiday season is the gift of health. These small changes can make a big difference.*

## Pumpkin Chowder

Pureed soup with pumpkin, onions and spices and finished with a touch of cream.

Portion: 1½ cups

Yields: 6



### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cups onions, chopped
- 2 tbsp. minced garlic cloves
- 2 lb. fresh pumpkin, cubed
- 4½ cups water
- 1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1½ tbsp. light brown sugar
- 1½ tbsp. cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp. heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup toasted pumpkin seed

### DIRECTIONS:

Drizzle olive oil into a hot pot and saute the onions and garlic for about 3 minutes until softened and slightly brown. Add the pumpkin and toss. Add water (just enough to submerge pumpkin) and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to simmer, cover with lid and cook for 20-30 minutes or until pumpkin is tender. Transfer to a blender, add seasoning and spices and blend until smooth. Return to pot, add the cream and stir to incorporate until hot. Garnish with toasted pumpkin seeds.

### NUTRITION FACTS:

Calories 120	Sodium 410mg
Protein 2g	Saturated fat 2.5g
Carbohydrate 20g	Dietary fiber 2g
Total fat 5g	



# 6 Tools for Coping with Holiday Stress

By Dawn Finney

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The holidays can be a time of joy and happiness, but they can also bring stress, anxiety and even depression. It is common during the holidays to have “to do” lists for yourself that may be unrealistic and even impossible to accomplish.

It's no wonder that the holidays can be extremely stressful, with the additional worries of family dinner, out of town visitors, parties, holiday traditions, gift buying and other obligations.

With the holidays just around the corner, here are some ways that you can prepare yourself and cope better this season.

**Don't over-commit.** Holidays are a time for parties with friends, family and even co-workers. You may feel an obligation to attend every function, which can create added stress and feelings of guilt. Decide which parties you can attend and which ones you don't have time for and stick to your pared-back schedule.

**Focus on self-care.** Taking time for yourself is important anytime of the year and especially during the busy holiday season. People tend to become ill during the winter and stress puts us at even greater risk for physical illness. Scheduling some alone time, getting adequate rest and focusing on proper nutrition will help keep you healthy in body and mind.

**Exercise.** Being active can increase endorphins in your brain and trigger positive feelings. If you're feeling anxious or stressed, even a short, brisk walk can help reduce anxiety.

**Rely on your support system.** If you notice you are unable to control your worry and have too much to do for one person to handle, call on your support system of family and friends to help. Divvy up the responsibilities if possible. Ask a friend to help with the shopping list or planning an event.



**Become more present focused.** When you find yourself starting to feel anxious about juggling all of your responsibilities, be aware of the present moment. Focus on what you are doing at the time instead of thinking about what needs to be done until you feel yourself start to relax.

**Recognize the holidays can be more difficult during times of loss.** For some, grief and loss may resurface this time of year, especially if the loss occurred during the holidays. When you experience these feelings, it is important to be open to your own feelings but also to let others in. Share your feelings and experiences with others. Another suggestion is to create a special tradition to honor your loved one.

Know that there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holiday season after the death of a loved one. The best way to cope with that first holiday season is to get support from others and remember to take time for yourself.

If you find yourself continuing to struggle with feelings of grief and it begins impacting your health, mental well-being, relationships, jobs or school, it may be advisable to seek the help of a mental health professional who specializes in grief counseling.



Your healthcare provider can help you determine the most effective treatment to help you enhance your quality of life.



# Winter Storm Safety Tips

## IN THE CAR



- Do not drive unless absolutely necessary
- Fully check and winterize your vehicle before traveling
- Keep your gas tank above half to prevent ice from forming in the fuel lines
- Carry a winter storm survival kit if you plan to travel
  - Blankets
  - Jumper cables
  - Flashlight
  - Water container
  - High calorie snack foods
  - Make sure your cell phone is charged

## AT HOME

- Allow faucets to drip to prevent freezing
- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to get to uninsulated pipes
- Have flashlights and extra batteries
- If you have a fireplace or wood stove, make sure you have a supply of firewood
- Close off unused rooms to conserve heat
- In case of a power outage, always use portable generators, camp stoves and grills outdoors – at least 20 feet away from windows, doors and vents to prevent deadly carbon monoxide poisoning



## DRESSING FOR WINTER



- Wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing
- Cover exposed skin to prevent frostbite
- Wear a hat to prevent loss of body heat
- Wear gloves or mittens
- Cover your mouth to protect your lungs

For more safety tips, visit  
[www.ready.gov/washington](http://www.ready.gov/washington)

  
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