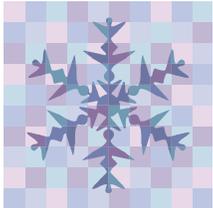


December: Healthy Holiday Substitutions

By Lisa Franzen-Castle, MS, PhD, RD
Extension Nutrition Specialist
UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center
Author E-mail: lfranzen2@unl.edu



During the holiday season, eating healthy can seem downright impossible. Between shopping for the holidays, family and work responsibilities and



sometimes not enough sleep, temptation to indulge in your favorite holiday foods can be hard to resist. This holiday season, instead of feeling bad about making and eating your

favorite holiday dishes and treats, make some simple substitutions to bump up the nutrition and decrease the fat, calories, and sodium in your recipes to have a healthier holiday season. Check out the following tips on making healthy holiday substitutions.

Making Healthy Holiday Substitutions:

- **Flour:** Try substituting whole wheat flour for half of the called for all-purpose flour in baked goods such as cakes and muffins to increase the nutrient content of your treats. Whole grains provide many nutrients vital for health, such as dietary fiber, B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium).
- **Cream:** Top off holiday pies with frozen or low-fat yogurt instead of whipped cream or ice cream. When recipes call for sour cream, use plain, low-fat or fat-free yogurt to make snacks that are lower in fat and calories. Dairy products that retain their calcium content such as yogurt have calcium as well as potassium, vitamin D, and protein.



- **Seasoning Salt:** When the recipe calls for seasoning salt, such as garlic salt, celery salt, or onion salt try using herb only seasoning, such as garlic powder, celery seed, onion flakes, or use finely chopped herbs garlic, celery, or onions. According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, a healthy adult should not exceed 2,300 mg of sodium a day, however many Americans consume twice that amount.
- **Eggs:** For cakes, cookies, and quick breads try using egg whites or cholesterol free egg substitute instead of whole eggs. Two egg whites or ¼ cup cholesterol free egg substitute can be used in many recipes in place of one whole egg. One large egg has about 213 mg of cholesterol, which is all located in the yolk, and it is recommended that healthy adults limit dietary cholesterol to less than 300 mg per day. Egg whites contain no cholesterol.



The National Institutes of Health say Americans gain about a pound every winter holiday season. Although one pound sounds small, over several years this adds up. Remember, obesity doesn't happen overnight, pounds accumulate slowly over time. So start a tradition this holiday season by getting creative and making your holiday recipes healthier through simple substitutions.

*Check out these additional resources on ingredient substitutions:

<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/ingredient-substitutions>
<http://real.unl.edu/programs/misc/Diabetes12-09-3-slide2.pdf>

Sources:

1. <http://www.mealtime.org/content.aspx?id=94>
2. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-recipes/NU00585/METHOD=print>
3. http://www.ncpad.org/nutrition/fact_sheet.php?sheet=769
4. <http://www.mypyramid.gov/holiday-healthycooking.html>

Updated: November 2010 **Know how. Know now.**



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.