

# Dietician's Corner

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## APPROACHING THE HOLIDAYS WITH HEALTH IN MIND

By Amanda Thul, RD, LD

A lot of people get stuck between wanting to enjoy the holidays and all the delicious food they bring and also wanting to continue to pursue their health goals...and they don't know how to find that balance or what it looks like.

I have 3 tips for people who are wanting to approach the holidays with health in mind. I find most success with focusing on gentle changes around eating and not being restrictive with food during the holiday.

1. Continue to eat consistent, balanced meals leading up to the holiday meal. It's normal to want to leave a little more room than normal to enjoy all the delicious food and dessert but we want to avoid going into the meal too hungry. When we wait too long between eating and we go into that physically uncomfortable with our hunger, we eat in an urgent matter because our body is literally starving for energy. And when we eat in an urgent matter, we overshoot our fullness and end up overeating by the end of the day. Undereating and overeating can both cause uncomfortable indigestion and bloating too.
2. Think about what nutrients will be abundant at your holiday meal and fill in the gaps at the meals leading up to your feast. We usually get lots of delicious carbs with potatoes, cookies, rolls and we get rich fats in gravy, butter, and cooking oils. Fiber and sometimes protein can be limited. Fill your plate at breakfast and lunch with protein foods and foods with fiber and color (AKA fruits and veggies) so by the end of the day, you'll have all of your nutrition covered.
3. Limit alcohol. Binge drinking is very common from Thanksgiving to New Years. Binge drinking is 4 or more alcoholic drinks for women and 5 or more drinks for men on one occasion. Even occasional excessive drinking can negatively impact health including increased risk for injury, illness, and chronic diseases. Swap out an alcoholic beverage with a fun mocktail like the recipe below.

Wishing you a happy holiday season!

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### CRANBERRY SPRITZER

- Makes 1 serving
- 1/4 cup cranberry juice
- 1/2 cup sparkling water
- 2 Tbsp simple syrup (optional)
- Garnishes: lime slice, fresh mint

Fill a glass with ice. Add juice, water, and simple syrup to the glass. Top with garnishes.

## Have More Questions?

I'd love to help you weed through the nutrition pseudoscience and get to the answer.

Reach me at the hospital at 515-332-7608.

HAPPY  
Holidays

