

HOLIDAY STRESS? TRY OUR TOP 5 TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON

If the holidays sometimes leave you feeling overwhelmed and out of control, you're not alone. And if the Grinch has stolen your spirit and good intentions, try some of these tips to reclaim your ho-ho-ho and stay happy and healthy.

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1. Keep up healthy habits.

Make a pact with yourself during the holidays. Decide that you'll move more and do something active every day over the next three weeks. Take it a step further, and pledge to start the day with a healthy breakfast, limit the sweets and get at least seven hours of sleep each night. If you don't completely give up your healthy habits, you won't feel like you have to start over once the holidays are over.

2. Beware of seasonal sweets.

The holidays often dish up extra helpings of less-than-healthy treats. Try preparing healthy snacks that are ready to eat when the urge to snack strikes. If you're hosting a holiday party, challenge yourself to make delicious and healthier options using our recipes and cooking tips.

3. Stay active.

Instead of beating yourself up about missing a workout, sprinkle some healthy activities into your daily routine. For example, if the weather isn't too frightful and you're working from home, ride your bike around your neighborhood during a lunch break. If dinner is going to be a feast, opt for a light lunch, then take a vigorous walk. And keep the family moving. When the kids are home from school, squeeze in some active chores and trips to the park.

4. Take time for yourself.

Give yourself the gift of peace. If you need some downtime to recharge, declare a "me-treat" and do something that relaxes you. Try yoga, meditation or spending time in nature.

5. Make a plan for the new year.

Your poinsettia's pooped and the gifts are all gone. Now what? It's a great time to reset for the new year – but don't go dashing through your to-do list too fast, or you might not stick to your plan. Lay out realistic, sustainable steps for the months ahead. For example, start a daily walking routine and sign up for a Heart Walk before you set your sights on that marathon.

Inside This Issue:

Calendar of Events	2
Extension Homemakers Holiday Luncheon	2
More Than Just a Meal	3-4
Turkey Chili Recipe	4
Tips of Making Your Holiday Meals Healthier	5
Wells County 4-H Enrollment	8

Health & Human Science News

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2024

- 1 & 2 Homesteading Conference, Allen Co.
- 5 Election Day, County Offices Closed
- 11 Veteran's Day, County Offices Closed
- 11 Extension Homemakers Executive Council Meeting, 2:00 PM
- 11 Extension Homemakers President's Council Meeting, 3:00 PM
- 28-29 Thanksgiving—County Offices Closed



December 2024

- 3 Extension Homemakers Holiday Luncheon
- 24-25 Christmas Holiday—County Offices Closed

January 2025

- 1 New Year's Day, County Offices Closed
- 13 Extension Homemakers Executive Council Meeting, 2:00 PM
- 13 Extension Homemakers President's Council Meeting, 3:00 PM
- 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day—County Office Closed
- 14-16 Fort Wayne Farm Show



A Matter of Balance

For those who signed up for the November Matter of Balance Program, the class will meet every Monday & Wednesday for 4 weeks from 1-3 PM. The dates are as follows:



MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

November 4
November 6
November 11
November 13
November 18
November 20
November 25
November 27



Extension Homemakers Holiday Luncheon

December 3rd

Registration begins at 10:30
Luncheon begins at 11:00

Wells County Community Center

To register for this event, pick up a registration form from your club president, or stop by the Extension Office.

TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR HOLIDAY MEALS HEALTHIER

It's the holiday season, and planning is underway for good times filled with friends, family and foods. It seems that every advertisement in stores, in magazines and on social media all refer to some form of holiday eating. We often give in to the festivities and overindulge in good-tasting food, but these foods may not be the healthiest for us. As we prepare food for family and friends, there are ways to make favorite holiday recipes healthier and still taste great.

Reduce the amount of fat and sugar when baking without losing the flavor.

Cutting the fat and sugars in half in a recipe is an easy way to cut added calories.

- Use half the butter and replace it with unsweetened applesauce, mashed bananas or even prune purée.
- Reduce the amount of sugar by one-third to one-half. Add rich-tasting spices to bolster flavor, such as cinnamon, cloves or allspice. You can even use extracts such as almond, vanilla or wintergreen.
- Cut the amount of cheese in a recipe by half. If your recipe calls for one cup of cheese, ½ cup would be sufficient, and you will be able to better taste the flavors of the other ingredients.

Make healthy substitutions that will boost the fiber content.

- Use whole wheat pasta instead of white pasta.
- Use brown rice instead of white rice.
- Use whole-grain bread and rolls.

Leave out ingredients.

- Leave out mayonnaise, butter or jelly in a recipe.
- Leave out excessive amounts of frosting, nuts and chips when baking.

Choose a different technique of preparation, such as broiling, grilling or steaming.

These methods can capture the flavor of your



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delicious foods without adding calories:

- Instead of frying, try broiling fish, meat and even vegetables.
- Try a fruit juice or vinegar if a recipe says to baste with oil.
- Use non-stick pans to eliminate oil when cooking.

Pay attention to your portion size.

- If the recipe is still very high in fat and sugars, reduce the portion size you eat.
- When reducing portion size, add healthy choices to help fill you up. Filling half of your plate with fruits or vegetables is a great place to start.

Eating well can be difficult over the holiday season, but finding ways to enjoy your favorite family meals is possible by making mindful choices. No matter how much you indulge over the holidays, remember it is never too late to get back on track with your healthy habits.

Source: www.canr.msu.edu

MORE THAN JUST A MEAL

What is a family meal? A “family meal” is when the people you live with come together to eat and talk. It can include everyone or just you and your child. Family meals don’t have to be fancy, and they can be eaten at home or away. Meals are best when you talk and listen to each other with no distracting electronic devices.

Do family meals make a difference?

Family meals are a simple way to build healthy relationships and promote health. Coming together as a family to share meals is associated with many benefits. Here are four:

Connection: Children and adults thrive on human connection. Eating meals together provides a great opportunity to connect with family and friends. Children — even teenagers! — thrive on having a mealtime routine they can count on. To make the most of the opportunity, turn off televisions, cellphones and other distractions. Gather at a table or somewhere you can focus on one another.



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Emotional well-being: Families who eat together have children who are less likely to be depressed and less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, such as smoking, drugs, and drinking alcohol. Family meals are also associated with a reduced risk for eating disorders.

Academic success: At meals, children practice important social skills, such as taking turns and engaging others in conversation. Children increase their vocabulary and learn how to express ideas at family meals. These benefits help explain why children who eat family meals more frequently are found to do better in school.

Healthier eating habits and weight: Meals planned and prepared for family meals are generally more nutritious than meals eaten alone or on the run. Family meals also provide an opportunity for parents to model good eating habits and attitudes about food. Family meals are associated with healthier weights in children and adults.

How can families succeed at having meals together?

Make family meals a priority – Parents and children make time for what is important to them. Prioritize family meals over other activities as often as possible. Schedule them on the family calendar, even if only once a week. Recognize that eating is an essential activity. Do it together rather than apart.

Plan for family meals – Look at your schedule and determine the days and times that eating together is possible. Decide what you will prepare; make sure you have what you need on hand. A weekly menu plan prevents last-minute worries about what to cook. Shopping for the week saves time and money — and reduces stress. Use time-saving strategies, such as doubling a recipe and freezing half for a future meal.

Continued on page 4

More Than Just a Meal
Continued from page 3

Share preparation tasks – Involve everyone in age appropriate tasks, including meal planning, finding recipes, grocery shopping, cooking, setting the table, and cleanup. Young children can do a variety of kitchen tasks. Older children can plan and prepare meals. Parents get valuable help and children learn lifelong skills.

Make meals enjoyable – Create an atmosphere where everyone feels relaxed and valued. Engage everyone in conversation. Use conversation starters to get people talking. Avoid battles over food – parents provide and children decide how much to eat of what is offered.

Tips for families of preschoolers

- Establish mealtime routines that prevent “hangry” young children. Include well-spaced meals and snacks. Provide sensible “appetizers,” such as raw veggies, while waiting for a meal. Prompt children with a signal, such as a 2-minute countdown, to put away toys, turn off devices, wash hands, and come eat.
- Involve young children in one or more meal-related tasks: picking out produce at the grocery store, pouring and stirring ingredients, dishing their own food, clearing their plate.

- Help young children learn the art of conversation. Allow them to tell stories about their day.

Tips for families of school-age kids

- Create a meal planning calendar. Ask your children to search for recipes online, make a shopping list and carry out prep from start to finish for one or more meals each week.
- Meal preparation helps school-age children practice math skills, food science, and creativity.
- Establish boundaries during mealtime that prohibit or limit the use of electronic devices. Engage children in conversation. Show them you value their opinions and ideas.

Tips for families of teenagers

- Scheduling is tricky. Be creative. Commit to as many meals together as possible – and make them happen by planning ahead.
- Meal planning and preparation are valuable lifelong skills. As often as possible, let your teenager be in charge.
- Teens need family connection as much or more than ever, so maintain a “no electronic devices” rule at your family table. Set an example by following the rule yourself.

Source: Purdue Publication HHS-832-W

Turkey Chili

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 1 (15 oz.) can kidney beans
- 1 (15 oz.) can baked beans
- 20 oz. whole, no-salt tomatoes
- 15 oz. marinara sauce
- 2 Tbsp. chili spice
- 3/4 cup water
- Salt and pepper, to taste



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Directions:

1. Start by sautéing the meat in a pan. Use 99% lean turkey meat, but you could also use 93% lean meat if you prefer. Drain pan if needed.
2. Add 2 Tbsp. chili spice and ¾ cup water and simmer for 5-10 minutes.
3. While meat is simmering, mix all other ingredients in a large saucepan. It’s easiest to crush the whole tomatoes with your hand as you add them to the pot.
4. Add sautéed meat and salt, pepper or other spices to taste. Simmer over medium heat for 15-20 minutes.

Source: thefamilydinnerproject.org



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It's Time to Enroll in 4-H for 2025!

The enrollment window for Wells County 4-H is October 1, 2024—January 15, 2025. Enroll early to avoid missing important information! You can enroll by visiting v2.4honline.com

Please feel free to call the Extension Office at 260-824-6412 if you have any questions, or if you need assistance.



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