

ON TRACK WITH BARIX

Support to Keep You On Track With a Healthful Lifestyle

Holiday Treats

Experience the joy of the holiday season in a new and improved way.

You've worked hard to eat better, move more and put new coping skills in place. Here come the holidays — the hardest time of the year for most to stick to healthy habits. Rather than overindulge with abandon, look for ways to experience the joy of the season in a new and improved way. Treat yourself to healthy indulgences and you can enjoy all the season has to offer and feel great.

Food has become the focal point of many holiday traditions, but it doesn't need to stay that way. Expand your focus beyond food and you'll be a positive influence on those around you. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Indulgences are part of the season — treat all of your senses, not just your taste buds. Flood your life with music that uplifts and soothes. Create a peaceful retreat spot in your home complete with soft lighting, instrumental music and pleasant fragrances. Take a bubble bath. Snuggle up with a soft throw. Indulge in a massage, manicure, pedicure or new hairstyle.
- Start or participate in a Secret Santa program. You'll have fun searching for small gifts to delight another and in the thrill of delivering the gifts without getting caught. This works well in many workplaces or neighborhoods.



- Be inspired through reading. If you're short on time, a collection of one-page stories, devotionals, or quotes may be the answer. Listening to an audio book while driving or exercising is an alternative.
- Make an extra effort to reach out to family and friends, especially those you don't regularly connect with.
- While you are out shopping, pick up small things for yourself that you wouldn't normally buy.

The hustle and bustle of the holidays can bring added stress. Excess stress can zap your energy and steal your joy. Treat yourself to a stress-free season this year.

- Take several meditative moments each day to clear your mind and breathe deeply. Finish each meditative moment by thinking of one thing you are grateful for.
- It's okay to say no. Don't overschedule or overspend — bow out of projects, gift buying, and commitments that you are not passionate about.

- Allow time for a brisk walk, yoga class or another form of exercise that you enjoy. It will help you beat holiday stress, sleep better, and keep your calorie balance in line.
- Enjoy quiet time in a candlelit room. Make the time extra special by sipping on a mug of sugar-free apple cider garnished with a cinnamon stick. If you need a protein boost, heat up milk and add no-added-sugar cocoa mix and garnish with a sugar-free candy cane.



Gatherings can make it especially hard to treat yourself in healthy ways. If you take a little time to plan ahead, you'll avoid being stuck in a tempting situation that you are not prepared to handle.

Going to a Gathering

- Take a no-added-sugar treat to share. You'll have something to enjoy that doesn't blow your eating plan.

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- Select a few of your favorite foods — fewer food items on your plate means you'll eat less.
- Nourish throughout the day. Rather than skipping meals with the thought of saving up calories, keep to your typical eating schedule. Six small protein-rich meals will help you thrive during the holidays.
- Hydrate and balance if you are consuming alcohol — alternate with a glass of water to make sure you don't overdo.
- Bring your own favorite low-calorie drink — maybe even enough to share.
- Sometimes just a bite is all you really need. Keep it to just a bite by snitching from someone else or take a bite and put your napkin over the rest.



- Focus on the people, not food. It's nice to just sit back and watch the positive interactions as they take place.
- Hosting a gathering** can make you feel that you have to provide the lavish foods and beverages that people have come to expect. Perhaps you can start to shift the focus to celebrate in healthier ways.
- Start or focus on traditions that don't involve food such as playing games, taking a walk together, making holiday wreaths, decorating gingerbread houses, setting up karaoke equipment and entertaining each other, or serving a holiday meal at a shelter.



- Serve simple low-calorie drinks in pretty glasses garnished with slices of fresh fruit.
- Set a menu, find healthy recipes and then ask others to pick one of the recipes to prepare and bring — the entire meal will be as healthy as possible.
- Prepare favorite dishes by using ingredients/methods that result in dishes that are lower in fat, sugar and calories. These little changes make a big difference.
 - o Use a gravy separator to skim the fat off drippings before making gravy. This simple step saves a whopping 56 gm of fat and 504 calories per cup. Another method is to freeze drippings for 15 minutes and skim fat off the top. You can also make gravy with fat-free turkey broth in place of the drippings.
 - o Take the skin off of the turkey after cooking and enjoy the white meat.
 - o Use skim milk and/or low-fat chicken broth in place of whole milk and butter in mashed potatoes.
 - o Make stuffing in a pan rather than stuffing the bird, using low-fat, low-sodium broth.
 - o Make dips with nonfat sour cream or nonfat plain Geek yogurt in place of regular sour cream to save 35-40 calories an ounce.
 - o Instead of serving candied yams (215 calories per half-cup serving), use oven-roasted sweet po-

tatoes. Brushed with a little olive oil, they have about 75 calories per serving. Another alternative is to use Splenda, stevia or sugar-free maple syrup in place of brown sugar.

- o Make cranberry relish with a sugar sub for a low-calorie (25 calories for 1/3 cup) treat.
- o In place of regular cream of mushroom soup, use low-fat or fat-free soup for green bean casserole. Top the casserole with crushed almonds in place of fried onions. Better yet, in place of the casserole, steam fresh green beans and sprinkle them with slivered almonds before serving.
- o Make faux eggnog—blend together until smooth 4 bananas, 1-1/2 cups skim milk 1-1/2 cups plain nonfat yogurt, and 1/4 teaspoon rum extract. Pour into glasses and top with a sprinkle of nutmeg.

You spend a good portion of your life at work. **It's important to celebrate the season with co-workers.** You can be an influencer and help others to adapt to healthier celebration options just by following your lead.

- Take no-added-sugar treats to share with co-workers for cookie exchanges, pot luck luncheons, or just because.
- Keep healthy snacks on hand to enjoy when the break room fills up with the sugary stuff.
- Steer clear of where the goodies are kept. Out of sight is out of mind.
- Start “non-food” holiday activities like Friday trivia and the winner gets a lottery ticket.

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- Volunteer as a group to “adopt” a family for the holiday. This common bond of focusing on someone else’s needs may help you to work together on other projects too.

Shopping can be exhausting and stressful when it’s crowded, you don’t know what to buy, and you are on a budget—a prime set-up for indulging in unhealthy treats. It can also be an opportunity to practice healthy habits.

- Wear a pedometer and keep track of your steps. Shoot for at least 10,000 steps a day. Hit your goal by doing at least some of your shopping at stores rather than online.

- Don’t skip meals and take a healthy snack or two with you; being famished makes it harder to resist mall indulgences. A portion of almonds or a protein bar work great for this circumstance.
- Keep shopping stress to a minimum by making a list, not waiting until the last minute, keeping it simple and buying items on sale.
- Consider gifts that help others to live a healthy lifestyle — a yoga mat, an olive oil sprayer or mister, a massage gift certificate, a fruit basket, a pedometer, a subscription to a health magazine, or other health-inspiring gifts.

Recipes

Holiday Cups

12 wonton wrappers
3 each Mini Babybel Light cheese, chopped
3 tbsp. unsweetened dried cranberries, chopped
3 tbsp. chopped pecans
1/8 tsp cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a muffin pan with nonstick spray and press wonton wrappers into cups. Lightly spray with nonstick spray, bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes. Add chopped cheese and return to the oven until cheese has melted. Sprinkle on cranberries and pecans and finish with a dash of cinnamon. Makes 12 servings.

Nutrition information per serving:
49 calories, 2 grams protein, 2 grams fat, 6 grams carbohydrate, 86 mg sodium.

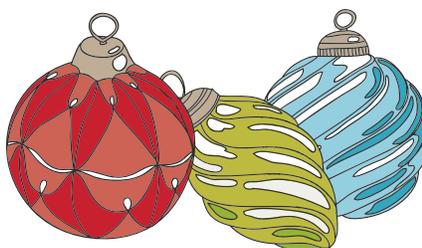


Eggnog

5 cups fat-free FairLife milk
1 4-serving box vanilla instant pudding, sugar-free
1 tsp. vanilla or rum extract
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
Extra Creamy Reddi-wip Cinnamon

Combine milk, pudding mix, sweetener, extract, and nutmeg in blender. Blend on high speed until smooth. Pour into glasses. Cover and refrigerate until thickened—about 30 minutes. Top with 2 Tbsp whipped topping and a sprinkle of cinnamon. Makes 5 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 125 calories, 13 grams protein, 1 gram fat, 12 grams carbohydrate, 360 mg sodium.



Recipes

Fruit Dip

- 1 Carton Dannon Triple Zero Greek yogurt
- 4 oz cream cheese, fat-free
- 1/8 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp stevia or other sweetener

Place all ingredients in a small bowl and mix with hand mixer until smooth and creamy.

Serve with fresh fruit. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 59 calories, 7 grams protein, 0 grams fat, 7 grams carbohydrate, 191 mg sodium.

Taco Cups

- 18 wonton wrappers
- 8 oz extra lean ground beef
- 1/2 package taco seasoning mix
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/4 cup cheddar cheese, finely shredded
- 1 cup fresh salsa
- 3 tbsp black olives, chopped
- 1 cup sour cream, fat-free

Brown hamburger and drain. Add taco seasoning mix and water. Bring to a boil and then simmer on medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a muffin pan with nonstick spray and press wonton wrappers into cups. Lightly spray with nonstick spray, bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes. Allow to cool slightly.

Layer in taco meat and fresh salsa. Top with a dollop of sour cream, a sprinkle of shredded cheddar and black olives. Remove taco cups gently from muffin tin and place on serving platter. Makes 18 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 61 calories, 4 grams protein, 1 gram fat, 7 grams carbohydrate, 141 mg sodium.



Best Brownies

- 1/4 lb butter (1 stick)
- 2 cups erythritol (powdered, not granulated)
- 1 Tbsp vanilla
- 4 eggs (room temp is best)
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 oz unsweetened chocolate, melted
- 2 cups flax seed meal
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1/3 cup cream
- 2/3 cup water
- 1 cup Splenda or Stevia
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 F and grease a 9X13 pan.

Cream the butter until fluffy. Add powdered erythritol and cream them together until fully combined with a fluffy texture. Add vanilla. Beat eggs into the mixture, one at a time. Add salt and cocoa, beat well. Add chocolate, beat until fluffy. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well to combine.

Pour mixture into a pan and bake for 35 to 40 minutes until top springs back or a toothpick comes out clean. Cool. Cut into 32 squares. Makes 32 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 120 calories, 4 grams protein, 11 grams fat, 6 grams carbohydrate, 107 mg sodium.



Ornament Crackers

- 4 oz cream cheese, fat-free
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 12 crackers
- Various vegetables for decoration

Mix cream cheese and garlic powder together until smooth. Spread in an even circle onto crackers. Cut up vegetables into small shapes and place to decorate. Makes 12 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 24 calories, 1 gram protein, 0 grams fat, 4 grams carbohydrate, 78 mg sodium.



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