



# Helpful tips for healthy holiday eating

*You can still enjoy holiday treats without dire consequences as long as you remember a few simple tricks.*

**BY DR. CHADY WONSON, DC, LAC,  
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*Dear Dr. Wonson:*

*The holidays are here! How can I enjoy all of the season's festivities without gaining weight or feeling sluggish? – Loves to Indulge*

Dear Loves to Indulge:

From holiday office parties and family feasts to work-place goodies, eating has become the central point of many holiday celebrations. While moderation is always important, there is no reason to feel guilty about a little indulgence during this holiday season. The following lists a few helpful tips that will keep your body in balance while enjoying some of your favorite holiday foods.



## How can I avoid eating too much?

Many people tend to eat more than usual during the holiday season. To prevent overeating, just remember these few simple tips:

- **Try to eat a light, healthy snack before attending any holiday event.** When you skip meals to save up room for the “good stuff” at the party, your blood sugar drops, creating a false sense of hunger. Before the event, you might want to have some almonds or walnuts, dried goji berries or a stalk of celery with almond butter.
- **Once you arrive at the event, try eating some olives.** In addition to vitamin E, olives contain a variety of beneficial active phytonutrient compounds including polyphenols and flavonoids, which appear to have significant anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Remember to eat in moderation, but don't deprive yourself.** Take a little bit of everything. Sometimes a taste is all you need to avoid cravings later.
- **Keep in mind that alcohol stimulates the appetite, lowers your resistance to impulse eating and causes dehydration.** Alcoholic drinks are also high in sugar, which can lead to weight gain. Have an alternative to alcohol, such as sparkling water with a slice of lime.
- **When you are eating, remember to chew your food thoroughly and to eat slowly.** Thoroughly chewing your food creates less work for the stomach, which in turn minimizes stress on the intestines and other internal organs.
- **Holiday parties nearly always feature dairy products, alcohol and sweets.** However, if you eat a lot of these items, they will cause dryness in your throat and increase the mucus in your lungs. To remedy this, try drinking tea that contains dried orange peel. Or, if you prefer, add dried orange peel to any type of tea. You can find dried orange peel in the spice section of any grocery store.
- **Try to follow big meals with light cardiovascular exercise, such as walking.**

You will burn calories, and the increased flow of oxygen will give your mind and body renewed strength and energy.

## Fun facts about your favorite holiday dishes

Holiday dishes do not have to be bad for you! In fact, many holiday favorites provide important nutritional benefits.

### • Cranberries

Since cranberries are an alkaline fruit, they help counteract the acidity caused by sugar. Cranberries also contain a healing agent that coats the tissue lining of the bladder, which prevents the growth of bacteria and serves as a natural remedy for bladder infections. Forget the canned stuff – buy fresh cranberries and follow the recipe on the package – it's easier than you think!

### • Yams and pumpkins

Yams, also known as sweet potatoes, and pumpkins have high levels of beta-carotene (vitamin A), which performs many important functions in the body. Vitamin A protects against the degenerative aspects of aging and may reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer. Additionally, vitamin A is an essential nutrient that helps heal tissue and may even prevent mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Yams and pumpkins also contain high levels of dietary fiber, which aids the digestive process.

### • Lamb

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, lamb is considered a naturally “warm” red meat that helps compensate for cold temperatures outside. Relatively low in fat and cholesterol, lamb is easy to digest and is a valuable source of protein, minerals and vitamins such as iron, zinc, thiamin (vitamin B-1), riboflavin (vitamin B-2) and niacin (vitamin B-3).

### • Ham

Ham, one of the leanest cuts of pork, is a “nutrient dense” meat. A good source of protein, ham also contains high

levels of vitamin B-1, vitamin B-2, iron and zinc.

### • Deep-fried turkey

Many people love the juicy flavors of a deep-fried holiday turkey. However, the fatty oils associated with this method of preparation can slow down the digestive process. To remedy this, try drinking green tea after you have finished eating. Green tea breaks down the fatty oils associated with deep-frying, thus helping the digestive process.

### • Vegetables

Don't forget to eat your vegetables! These essential elements of life are full of important nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, proteins, complex carbohydrates and water. Naturally low in fat, vegetables also contain certain antioxidants and enzymes that have been shown to protect the body from serious illnesses such as cancer. Fill your plate with vegetables in a variety of colors – the secret to their nutrient content. For example, green leafy vegetables contain high levels of calcium, iron and magnesium, while orange vegetables provide beta-carotene.

## Conclusion

By following these helpful suggestions, you will be able to remain productive during the holiday season and be ready to hit the ground running when the New Year arrives.

*For more than 20 years, Dr. Chady F. Wonson, DC, LAC, CTN, CNC, has been helping patients in the San Francisco Bay Area achieve and maintain pain-free, healthy lifestyles. Specializing in chiropractic care, acupuncture, acupressure, physiotherapy, Chinese herbal remedies and natural supplements, Dr. Wonson unites time-honored Eastern healing arts with modern Western medical knowledge to alleviate pain and restore vitality. Visit her Web site at <http://drwonson.com>.*



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