

November 2023

11/7/23: Healthy Holidays: 6 tips for Maintaining Good Habits

The holidays can be a difficult time of year for many things, despite all the cheer. With the cooler weather, irresistible foods, and stress, even the strongest-willed person can stumble with health habits. I'm Clarissa Moon here with 6 tips on maintaining your habits over the holidays.

1. Eat in. Takeout is tempting, but you're more likely to buckle down and stay home if you stock up on healthy foods in advance. Buy some easy, ready-to-go meals at the store like salads or wraps, but also some versatile choices that can go into casseroles and such like canned veggies, beans and pasta.
2. Don't skip breakfast. Studies show that those who eat balanced meals throughout the day have higher metabolism and better appetite control.
3. Watch your glass. Many beverages contain added sugars and hidden calories. Cutting back on these is a simple change you can make to conserve calories. Even juice can be tempting, but experts recommend that you stick to whole fruits in order to get the fiber benefit.
4. Stay active. Make a personal commitment to get in a 15-minute walk before everyone else gets up or make an effort to move more as a family. Try doing seasonal activities like ice skating or other together activities like basketball, movement video games or jump rope. Plan other activities that don't involve eating like visiting a museum or park.
5. Strive for balance. You're at your best when you have healthy foods, regular exercise and adequate sleep. These 3 tools help you build up your energy and reduce stress.
6. When in doubt, ask an expert. Talk to me if you have general questions on health and wellness, but for more specific questions you may want to consult and health care provider or dietician.

That's it- 6 tips to keep you movin' and groovin' at your best during this holiday season. For more info, visit [mayoclinichealthsystem.org](https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/healthy-holidays-maintaining-good-habits) or panola.agrilife.org. Thanks for listening to the Moon Minute!

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/healthy-holidays-maintaining-good-habits>

11/14/23: Turkey Basics- Safe Thawing

One of the most common food safety mistakes made today is- thawing meat on the counter. Meat must be kept at a safe temperature while thawing because any preexisting bacteria can begin to grow again once the temp hits 40 degrees. So what are some safe thawing practices? I'm Clarissa Moon here to explain it all.

There are three safe ways to thaw food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave oven. Notice that “on the counter” is not one of the three safe methods.

- For the refrigerator: First, make sure it’s at 40 degrees or below. Plan ahead and allow 24 hours for every 4-5 pounds of meat to thaw. Then, place the turkey in a container to prevent the juices from dripping onto other foods.
- Cold water thawing- allow about 30 minutes per pound. First, place the turkey in a leak-proof plastic bag. You don’t want water to get in nor turkey juices to get out. Submerge the bird in cold tap water. Change water every 30 minutes until it’s thawed. Cook turkey immediately after thawing.
- Microwave Method- look at your owner’s manual and follow those instructions. You must also cook the turkey immediately upon thawing in the microwave.

Be a food safety smartie this thanksgiving and use one of the three recommended thawing methods! For a table with detailed thawing times and more info, visit our website at panola.agrilife.org or fsis.usda.gov.

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/poultry/turkey-basics-safe-thawing>

11/21/23: Have Your Pie and Eat It Too

Food is a central part of our holiday traditions and something (perhaps THE thing) we look forward to the most! But so often we can become plagued with guilt for overindulging. I’m Clarissa Moon here with a few tips on how to have your pie and eat it too.

- 1) Use a smaller plate- this will trick your brain into thinking you have a larger meal, while actually shrinking your portion sizes.
- 2) Browse the buffet first so you can spend your calories wisely- on those foods you really like.
- 3) Divide and conquer. Start out with about half of the food you think you want, then go back for more later. This will force you to eat slower and give your stomach time to digest and signal when it’s full before it’s too late.
- 4) Make fruits and veggies a part of your plate. These goodies are nutrient-dense rather than calorie-dense and provide the most nutritional bang for your buck!
- 5) Serve some foods separately. Let people serve themselves on higher-calorie dressings and toppings.
- 6) Make your first bites your best bites. Slow down and savor the flavor. You’ll enjoy the taste more and be satisfied with a smaller amount.
- 7) Provide take-home containers for guests. This way you don’t have too much extra food around that could go to waste in the garbage or waste on your waist!

- 8) Be mindful during the holidays. Many people tend to gain a few pounds during this time of year and may not lose it. Year after year, these pounds can add up and put you at higher risk for chronic disease.

There you go, 8 tips for having your pie and eating it too! For more information visit food.unl.edu or Panola.agrilife.org. thanks for listening to the Moon Minute!

<https://food.unl.edu/article/how-have-your-thanksgiving-pie-and-eat-it-too>

11/28/23: 10 Tips to add more Veggies

Vegetables are one of those things that we can't live with and can't live without. They provide so many nutrients that our bodies need, but nachos are so much more appealing. The good news is that every little bit makes a difference! Whether you're a veggie-phobic or just looking to mix up your veggie game, I've got ten tips to help you add more veggies to your day. I'm Clarissa Moon here with your ten tips.

- 1) Discover fast ways to cook. Cook fresh or frozen veggies in the microwave for a quick side dish to any meal.
- 2) Be ahead of the game. Cut up a batch of vegetables and put them in little pre-packaged deals for when time is limited.
- 3) Choose vegetables rich in color. Bold colors mean phytonutrients are present- plus they're just pretty!
- 4) Check the freezer aisle. Frozen veggies are my jam. You can find the pre-mixed ones that you just pop in the microwave! It doesn't get much easier than that.
- 5) Stock up on veggies. Canned vegetables are a great addition to any meal, and they're easy to keep on hand.
- 6) Eat a rainbow. Add different colors of vegetables to your plate like avocados or bell peppers to make it more appealing and fun!
- 7) Sip on some soup. Soup is a real easy way to sneak more veggies in your diet. Look for reduced sodium canned options or make your own!
- 8) While you're out- choose a side salad or veggies for your side instead of the traditional fried food.
- 9) Savor the flavor of seasonal veggies. Buy vegetables that are in season for maximum flavor and minimal cost.
- 10) Vary your veggies- go crazy and try something new like rutabaga or jicama!

There you have it- 10 tips to get more veggies! For more info visit choosemyplate.gov or panola.agrilife.org

<https://eatsmartmovemoreva.org/documents/dg-tip-sheet-add-more-vegetables-to-your-day/>