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## Holidays the Healthy Way

The holidays are in full swing, which means lots of family, fun and food! But it doesn't have to mean extra pounds. Even holiday treats can fit into a healthy eating plan. The key is balance and moderation.

To avoid holiday weight gain, balance the calories you consume with the calories you burn. Physical activity and moderate food choices will help. The tips below are gifts you can give yourself and your family to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

### Let the holiday spirit move you!

If you make your family time active, you will become healthier and have fun doing so. Be adventurous and try something new, but also choose something you enjoy.

- Stick to your regular exercise routine as much as possible. Especially during the holidays, plan your physical activity routine in advance (don't leave it up to chance). Mark it on the calendar and consider it as important as any other appointment. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity daily, and more if possible.
- Cut back on your family's television viewing time. Limit the number of hours your children spend playing video games. Instead make a new holiday tradition. Take a brisk walk (or wheel) around the neighborhood to see the holiday decorations or grab your bike, walking shoes and head out to the nearest trails or national park.
- Play some backyard football or Frisbee with children and adults before the big holiday dinner or during football half-time.
- Dance or exercise to your favorite holiday music.
- Make a New Year's resolution with friends to start a daily walking group.
- Be physically active to avoid or relieve the holiday stress.

### Healthy Holiday Eating

- Overcome the urge to overeat. Standing by the buffet table is temptation to overeat. Remember holiday parties are a time to celebrate with family and friends, not just food.
- It's easy to overindulge during the holidays. Make sure to watch portion sizes and select one or two of your favorites from the host of tempting foods.
- Leave those extra calories behind—limit your intake of foods high in fat or added sugar.
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

### Holidays the Healthy Way

Holidays are a great time to enjoy a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables.

- Bowls of fresh fruit are a festive and sweet substitute for candy or chocolates
- Remember calories add up! This is especially true during the holidays when we snack more. For a healthy snack, choose a piece of fresh fruit.
- You've tried the leftover turkey sandwich; now try the leftover turkey salad! Add a few pieces of turkey to a generous portion of mixed greens, cucumbers, mushrooms, peppers, or any other vegetables you like. Sprinkle with dried cranberries for that authentic holiday taste.
- Check out <http://www.cdc.gov/5aday> for great ideas to serve your guests a variety of fruits and vegetables!

### A Present Packed with a Colorful Variety

- For a great holiday gift, try going to your farmer's market or grocery store and selecting fresh fruits and vegetables. Place all your tasty treats in a basket, and you have a present packed with tasty fruits and vegetables.

**Source: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention & Health**

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## A Winter Alternative to Fresh Fruit

Consuming fruits and vegetables is easy in the summer when everything is fresh and readily available. What do you do in the middle of winter?

A convenient option is dried fruit. Like fresh, dried fruit contains lots of fiber, vitamin A and C, potassium and folate.

Dried fruit is a portable snack and in the kitchen it can be added to salads, pancake batter, bread recipes or a bowl of cereal.

Dried fruit may contain more calories per serving than fresh and some dried fruits are preserved with sulfite, which can trigger allergic reactions in some people, so read the package label.

**Source: American Dietetic Association**

# Are You Storing Food Safely?

**The goal is to keep yourself and others from being sickened by microorganisms ...**

Whether putting food in the refrigerator, the freezer, or the cupboard, you have plenty of opportunities to prevent foodborne illnesses.

The goal is to keep yourself and others from being sickened by microorganisms such as *Salmonella*, *E. coli 0157:H7*, and *C. botulinum*, which causes botulism. Keeping foods chilled at proper temperatures is one of the best ways to prevent or slow the growth of these bacteria.

These food storage tips can help you steer clear of foodborne illnesses.

## Storage Basics

**Refrigerate or freeze perishables right away.** Foods that require refrigeration should be put in the refrigerator as soon as you get them home. Stick to the “two-hour rule” for leaving items needing refrigeration out at room temperature. Never allow meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or other foods that require refrigeration to sit at room temperature for more than two hours — one hour if the air temperature is above 90°F. This also applies to items such as leftovers, “doggie bags,” and take-out foods. Also, when putting food away, don’t crowd the refrigerator or freezer so tightly that air can’t circulate.

Keep the appliances at the proper temperatures. Keep the refrigerator temperature at or below 40°F (4° C). The freezer temperature should be 0° F (-18° C). Check temperatures periodically. Appliance thermometers are the best way of knowing these temperatures and are generally inexpensive.

**Check storage directions on labels.** Many items other than meats, vegetables, and dairy products need to be kept cold. For instance, mayonnaise and ketchup should go in the refrigerator after opening. If you’ve neglected to properly refrigerate something, it’s usually best to throw it out.

**Use ready-to-eat foods as soon as possible.** Refrigerated ready-to-eat foods such as luncheon meats should be used as soon as possible. The longer they’re stored in the refrigerator, the more chance *Listeria*, a bacterium that causes foodborne illness, can grow, especially if the refrigerator temperature is above 40° F (4° C).

**Be alert for spoiled food.** Anything that looks or smells suspicious should be thrown out. Mold is a sign of spoilage. It can grow even under refrigeration. Mold is not a major health threat, but it can make food unappetizing. The safest practice is to discard food that is moldy.

## Refrigeration Tips

**Marinate food in the refrigerator.** Bacteria can multiply rapidly in foods left to marinate at room temperature. Also, never reuse marinating liquid as a sauce unless you bring it to a rapid boil first.

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**Clean the refrigerator regularly and wipe spills immediately.** This helps reduce the growth of Listeria bacteria and prevents drips from thawing meat that can allow bacteria from one food to spread to another. Clean the fridge out frequently.

**Keep foods covered.** Store refrigerated foods in covered containers or sealed storage bags, and check leftovers daily for spoilage. Store eggs in their carton in the refrigerator itself rather than on the door, where the temperature is warmer.

**Check expiration dates.** If food is past its “use by” date, discard it. If you’re not sure or if it looks questionable, throw it out.

### Freezer Facts

**Food that is properly frozen and cooked is safe.** Food that is properly handled and stored in the freezer at 0° F (-18° C) will remain safe. While freezing does not kill most bacteria it does stop bacteria from growing. Though food will be safe indefinitely at 0° F, quality will decrease the longer the food is in the freezer. Tenderness, flavor, aroma, juiciness and color can all be affected. Leftovers should be stored in tight containers. With commercially frozen foods, it’s important to follow the cooking instructions on the package to assure safety.

**Freezing does not reduce nutrients.** There is little change in a food’s protein value during freezing.

**Freezer burn does not mean food is unsafe.** Freezer burn is a food-quality issue, not a food safety issue. It appears as grayish-brown leathery spots on frozen food. It can occur when food is not securely wrapped in air-tight packaging, and causes dry spots in foods.

**Refrigerator/freezer thermometers should be monitored.** Refrigerator/freezer thermometers may be purchased in the housewares section of department, appliance, culinary, and grocery stores. Place one in your refrigerator and one in your freezer, in the front in an easy-to-read location. Check the temperature regularly — at least once a week.

### If You Lose Electricity

If you lose electricity, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Your refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours if it’s unopened. A full freezer will keep an adequate temperature for about 48 hours if the door remains closed.

### Tips for Non-Refrigerated Items

**Check canned goods for damage.** Can damage is shown by swelling, leakage, punctures, holes, fractures, extensive deep rusting, or crushing or denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking or opening with a manual, wheel-type can opener. Stickiness on the outside of cans may indicate a leak. Newly purchased cans that appear to be leaking should be returned to the store for a refund or exchange. Otherwise, throw the cans away.

**Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration**

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## Know Your Limits:

### Why, When and How to Be Sure You're Fully Protected by FDIC Insurance

A deposit in an FDIC-insured bank or savings institution is one of the safest ways to protect your money. Bank failures are uncommon (only three banks failed in 2007 and a dozen in 2008). Also, the overwhelming majority of depositors have accounts that are fully within the FDIC's insurance limits. However, "if a bank fails, any deposits that exceed the FDIC's insurance limits are not protected by FDIC insurance," said Kathleen Nagle, Associate Director of the FDIC's Consumer Protection Branch. "That's why it's important for consumers to be aware of their insurance coverage and how they might ensure that their deposits are fully protected."

Here are some basic points to remember.

**If you (or your family) have \$100,000 or less in all of your deposit accounts at the same insured bank, you don't need to worry about your insurance coverage.** Your deposits are fully protected under federal law and FDIC rules because the basic insurance coverage is \$100,000 per depositor per insured institution.

**You may qualify for more than \$100,000 in coverage at one insured bank if you own deposit accounts in different "ownership categories."** For example, let's say you have three accounts at one bank. Two of the accounts you own by yourself — a savings account totaling \$65,000 and a checking account with a balance of \$9,000. The third account is a \$180,000 certificate of deposit (CD) that you own jointly with another person, and your share is presumed to be half (\$90,000) unless specified otherwise. Because the checking and savings accounts are both held in the single-account category (that is, owned by one person), they are added together for insurance purposes and the total (\$74,000) is fully insured since it is under the \$100,000 FDIC limit for single accounts. Because the CD is a joint account (a different ownership category), your \$90,000 share is fully insured, separately from your single accounts. So, even though you have \$164,000 in deposits at one bank, all of it would be fully insured by the FDIC.

In addition, FDIC rules from some ownership categories allow you to hold more than \$100,000 in one account and still be fully insured. For example, certain retirement accounts are insured up to \$250,000 per owner per bank. And, the owner of one or more revocable trust accounts — a category of deposits intended to pass along to named beneficiaries upon the owner's death — can be insured up to \$100,000 for the actual interests of each qualifying beneficiary if certain requirements are met. That would mean all the revocable trust accounts you have in one insured bank could be insured for as much as \$200,000 if there were two qualifying beneficiaries, \$300,000 if there were three, and so on. The rule for coverage of revocable trust deposits, which include payable-on-death accounts and living trust accounts are very specific. For more information, check with the FDIC.

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Periodically review your coverage if there's been a big change in your life or banking situation and you have deposits of more than \$100,000 at one bank. For example, if two people have a \$150,000 joint account (which is fully insured up to \$200,000), and one of them dies, the survivor has six months under the FDIC's rules to restructure the account. After that, the entire account is insured as the survivor's single-ownership deposits along with any other accounts in that group, up to \$100,000, thus leaving \$50,000 or more over the insurance limit and at risk of loss if the bank failed.

Also review your coverage if you own accounts at two institutions that merge and the combined funds exceed \$100,000. Accounts at the two institutions before the merger continue to be separately insured for six months after the merger, and longer for CDs, but you have to remember to review the accounts within the grace period to avoid a potential problem with uninsured funds.

**The FDIC can help you understand and determine your insurance coverage.** To learn more about how to qualify for more than \$100,000 in coverage at one bank, you need to know how FDIC insurance works.

For guidance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, go to <http://www.fdic.gov/deposit/deposits/index.html> to find insurance brochures and videos. This site also gives you access to FDIC's interactive Electronic Deposits Insurance Estimator (EDIE), which allows users to calculate the insurance coverage of their accounts and generate a printable report that clearly states if their deposits are fully insured or not. The FDIC also responds to letters, e-mails and calls from consumers who have questions about their insurance coverage.

**Source: [www.fdic.gov](http://www.fdic.gov)**

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## Supermarket Savings Tips

It's possible to save money shopping for groceries without cooking everything from scratch, packing your purse with coupons, or purchasing foods in season. Here are two handy tips:

1. **Keep a grocery list.** Gas for an extra trip to the store can add a dollar or more to your grocery bill. Keep a grocery list where it's easily accessible, such as on the fridge and remember to take it with you to the grocery store. Stick to your list for added savings, but do stay flexible if you encounter a sale.
2. **Avoid shopping when hungry.** Everything looks good on an empty stomach. And, it's all too easy to buy something to tide us over in the car until we make it home. Eating before going shopping not only helps forestall impulse buys, it may save calories. If you're shopping with your kids, feed them in advance, as well.

**Source: University of Nebraska Extension, Lancaster County.**

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## National Diabetes Month

There are 20.8 million children and adults in the United States living with diabetes, yet people don't even know they have it. Diabetes exists in three forms: Type 1, or insulin dependent, Type 2, or non-insulin dependent and gestational diabetes.

Diabetes is a condition that affects the way your body uses energy in food. People who have diabetes have trouble controlling their blood sugar levels. Common symptoms of diabetes include fatigue, increased thirst and urination, infections and cuts that don't heal, blurred vision, hunger and weight loss.

The goal for diabetes management is controlling your blood sugar levels so they stay as near to normal as possible. Your blood sugar levels are like a teeter-totter. They go up and down. Those swings can be dangerous when diet, exercise and medication such as insulin aren't balanced properly.

No matter what type of diabetes you have, control the "teeter totter" by carefully managing what you eat, how much and when. The game plan for smart eating with diabetes follows this general strategy: Eat about the same amount of food, in the right balance, at about the same time daily; to avoid weight gain, balance your day's food choices with regular physical activity.

Some other general guidelines about managing diabetes and preventing its symptoms include:

- Get advice from a registered dietitian, many of whom are certified diabetes educators, for an eating plan that's right for you.
- Choose a variety of nutrient-rich foods that supply at least 60 percent of calories from carbohydrates.
- Check Nutrition Facts on the food labels to know total carbohydrate grams, as well as fat and protein grams in a single serving.
- Be portion savvy. Use measuring spoons and cups and buy a kitchen scale.

If you have diabetes, manage how you eat, refuel with foods regularly, incorporate physical activity into your daily routine and control your weight. For many people, smart eating, weight loss and active living are enough to control their blood sugar level.

**Source: American Dietetic Association**

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## Tips to Help You Eat More Grain

### At Meals:

- To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product – such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice. It's important to *substitute* the whole-grain product for the refined one, rather than *adding* the whole-grain product.
- For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese.
- Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup or stews and bulgur wheat in casserole or stir-fries.
- Create a whole grain pilaf with a mixture of barley, wild rice, brown rice, broth and spices. For a special touch, stir in toasted nuts or chopped dried fruit.
- Experiment by substituting whole wheat or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening.
- Use whole-grain bread or cracker crumbs in meatloaf.
- Try rolled oats or a crushed, unsweetened whole grain cereal as breading for baked chicken, fish, veal cutlets, or eggplant parmesan.
- Try an unsweetened, whole grain ready-to-eat cereal as croutons in salad or in place of crackers with soup.
- Freeze leftover cooked brown rice, bulgur, or barley. Heat and serve it later as a quick side dish.

### As Snacks:

- Snack on ready-to-eat, whole grain cereals such as toasted oat cereal.
- Add whole-grain flour or oatmeal when making cookies or other baked treats.
- Try a whole-grain snack chip, such as baked tortilla chips.
- Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack with little or no added salt and butter.

### What to Look for on the Food Label:

- Choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients first on the label's ingredient list:

“brown rice”	“whole oats”
“bulgur”	“whole rye”
“graham flour”	“whole wheat”
“oatmeal”	“wild rice”
“whole grain corn”	

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- Foods labeled with the words “multi-grain,” “stone-ground,” “100% wheat,” “cracked wheat,” “seven-grain,” or “bran” are usually *not* whole-grain products.
- Color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the ingredient list to see if it is a whole grain.
- Use the [Nutrition Facts label](#) and choose products with a higher % Daily Value (%DV) for fiber – the %DV for fiber is a good clue to the amount of whole grain in the product.
- Read the food label’s ingredient list. Look for terms that indicate added sugars (sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, and molasses) and oils (partially hydrogenated vegetable oils) that add extra calories. Choose foods with fewer added sugars, fats, or oils.
- Most sodium in the food supply comes from packaged foods. Similar packaged foods can vary widely in sodium content, including breads. Use the [Nutrition Facts label](#) to choose foods with a lower % DV for sodium. Foods with less than 140 mg sodium per serving can be labeled as low sodium foods. Claims such as “low in sodium” or “very low in sodium” on the front of the food label can help you identify foods that contain less salt (or sodium).

### Whole Grain Tips for Children

- Set a good example for children by eating whole grains with meals or as snacks.
- Let children select and help prepare a whole grain side dish.
- Teach older children to read the ingredient list on cereals or snack food packages and choose those with whole grains at the top of the list.

Source: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

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## Supermarket Savings Tips

It’s possible to save money shopping for groceries without cooking everything from scratch, packing your purse with coupons, or purchasing foods in season. Here is one handy tip:

1. **Staple food stock up.** Invest in staple foods when they’re on sale. Buying a boatload of bananas (and other perishable foods) isn’t a very good long-term investment. Stocking up on staple items such as reduced-price canned tuna, tomato sauce or mandarin oranges can be a wise decision and a money saver. Remember to check expiration dates.

Source: **University of Nebraska Extension, Lancaster County**

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# Florida Food Fare

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## Figs

**Description:** A native of western Asia and the Mediterranean area, the fig is one of the earliest fruits known to man. It is estimated that they have been around for at least 6,000 years. The fig, a member of the mulberry family, is one of the sweetest fruits when fully ripe. Figs are not generally grown commercially in Florida because they are so perishable, but rather enjoyed as a dooryard fruit. The common varieties in Florida include; Celeste, a small purplish-bronze to light brown fruit with closed "eye"; Brown Turkey, a moderate sized bronze fruit with medium "eye"; and Green Ischia, a green color with a closed "eye".

**Availability:** Fresh figs are available from June through October. They do not ship well so local fruit will most likely be found in the markets. Figs are sold dried and candied in the supermarket, particularly around the holidays.

**Nutritional Value:** Figs are high in dietary fiber and are a rich source of magnesium and potassium. They are also relatively high in vitamins A, B, and C and low in calories, about 50 calories each.

**Selection and Care:** Fresh figs must be fully ripe to be of good quality. Green ones will shrivel when cooked. Ripeness or maturity cannot be judged by size. A ripe fig is rather soft and varies in color according to variety. Pick just as the skin begins to break. Be careful not to bruise the fruit, as this will make it spoil very quickly. Avoid overripe figs detectable by their sour odor, a sign of fermentation. Fresh figs are highly perishable. Try to pick the fruit daily and either use or preserve it the same day for best quality and flavor. If you must store figs overnight, place in a single layer in a shallow container in the coldest part of the refrigerator. For longer storage, fresh figs may be frozen for up to 6 months.

**Preparation and Use:** To use figs, remove the stem ends and halve, chop or slice, according to your recipe. Because their skins are edible, figs do not require peeling. Figs are a favorite breakfast fruit, and make a delightfully sweet addition to appetizers, salads or desserts. Because figs are high in pectin, they are ideal for jams and preserves.

### Stuffed Figs Appetizer

4 ounces Neufchatel cheese

1/4 teaspoon paprika

Skim or lowfat milk to moisten 12 large figs

1/3 cup nuts

1/3 cup celery, chopped

Lettuce, chopped

Soften cheese with milk to make a paste. Add nuts, celery and paprika. Mix, remove stems from figs. Cut in half lengthwise. Scoop out some of inside and fill cavity with cheese mixture. Arrange 3 stuffed figs on lettuce and serve cold as an appetizer or salad. Yield 4 servings.