

# In the Nutrition Lane

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## Strategies for Healthy Holiday Eating

The annual holiday challenge is upon us: How do we navigate the holidays feeling good about our food choices, and just plain *feeling good*? We all have experienced the lethargy that follows a too-big meal, that extra piece of pumpkin pie, or a few too many Christmas cookies. Here are some ideas that may help in those food decisions that we often face during this time of year.

**Avoid going hungry to social events.** It's usually easy to tell who has skipped dinner before the party; they're the ones hovering around the buffet table all evening. At social gatherings, whether with friends or family, focus on **people** rather than on food.

**Plan activities that don't center on food.** Use any excuse to divert attention from television, passive electronic games, and snacks, such as walking the dog or viewing the neighborhood Christmas lights.

**Make food choices *conscious*,** not directed by whim or by someone else's urging. (Dessert eaters always want you to join them!) Consider what you *really* want to eat when dinner or appetizers are served. If pre-cut portions are too large, don't hesitate to take only a half-serving. Someone else will be glad for the other half left.

**Keep cookies and candy out of sight except when serving.** Those that are left out all day tend to disappear a lot quicker than when served following a meal or at other chosen times. For many, the sight or smell of these yummy treats is too great an appetite trigger to resist.

**Set realistic goals for yourself during the holidays.** If you're trying to lose weight, allow yourself the leeway to simply maintain a stable weight through the holidays.

**Remember the vegetables!** The holidays typically include more than the usual number of parties and social gatherings, which often means that eating in a balanced way becomes more challenging. Making sure to include at least a few servings of vegetables a day helps to fill you up (at a very low caloric cost), provides superb nutrition, and allows you to feel good about your wise food choices.

### Marinated Sweet Peppers

(A colorful appetizer or side dish)

1 each: large sweet red, green, & yellow pepper,  
cut into ½" wide strips  
¼ c seasoned rice vinegar  
2 tbsp snipped fresh basil  
lemon leaves and black olives (optional)

Spray a large skillet with oil. Add pepper strips. Cover and cook over medium heat about 5 min. or till slightly tender. Transfer to glass bowl. Add vinegar and basil; toss until coated. Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving. Garnish with lemon leaves and black olives, if desired.

### Cranberry Apple Sweet Potato Bake

4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled, in ¼-inch slices  
2 granny smith apples, peeled, cored, sliced in rings  
½ c dried cranberries  
½ c packed brown sugar  
3 tbsp butter, melted  
½ tsp ground cinnamon

Combine all ingredients in large baking pan. Cover with foil and bake at 400°F until sweet potatoes and apples are soft (~45 minutes).