

## Healthy eating during the holidays starts with balance

The holidays are filled with time-honored traditions that involve family, friends and, all-too-often, an overabundance of food. While we're all busy making plans to celebrate, wrapping gifts and deciding holiday menus, it's important to focus on balance to stay happy and healthy this holiday season, according to Gina Wood, Family Nutrition Program Specialist at the West Virginia University Extension Service.

Studies show that Americans on average gain one to two pounds each year during the holiday season. While it may not seem like much, the weight gain can add up quickly if we don't take measures to bounce back to a healthy routine.

Luckily, staying balanced and maintaining health during the holidays is possible with a few small changes in lifestyle:

- **Get up and move**

Jump-start your metabolism around holiday meals to burn calories and keep stress levels low. You can even start a new tradition of taking a group walk before or after a meal, making health a priority for the whole family.

- **Give holiday recipes a makeover**

It's easier to maintain a more balanced diet during the holidays when recipes are made with the right ingredients. Whether it means using leaner meats or swapping a few ingredients in your favorite holiday desserts, making holiday meals healthier is a simple—and still delicious—way to cut back on calories. Visit [snaped.fns.usda.gov](http://snaped.fns.usda.gov) for healthy recipe ideas to add to the holiday menu.



Where there's an indulgent dessert, make sure to offer a fruit or veggie tray.

- **Keep holiday menus balanced**

You don't have to give up everything you enjoy eating to stay healthy. Where there's an indulgent dessert, make sure to offer a fruit and veggie tray. Where there's a hearty dip, include a lighter appetizer. Keep portions small and fill up on healthier alternatives before eating the higher calorie dishes.

- **Don't drink your calories**

If you're looking to enjoy a higher calorie holiday meal, cut calories elsewhere in your diet by staying away from soda, alcohol and sugary beverages. Water, or even low-fat milk, is recommended to keep you full and prevent you from reaching for higher calorie drinks.

*By Brittany Dick, Writer/Editor,  
WVU Extension Service*

### Make ATV safety a priority this hunting season

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- Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

*By Zane Lacko, Writer/Editor, WVU  
Extension Service*

## WVU Update

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