



12 Nutritional tips on how to stay healthy at Christmas - December 2009

1st Tip for Christmas

Decide what you are going to eat each day in the morning before you start. Think about 3 meals and 3 snacks.

Start the day with a good breakfast, top up with small snack (fruit or raw veg) before lunch and then mid afternoon. Eat dinner before 7pm if possible.

2nd Tip for Christmas

Drink lots of water throughout the Christmas period starting your day with some hot water and lemon juice, which has a cleansing affect on the body. We all know how important it is to drink water and to stay hydrated. Also the water will keep your body from feeling hungry throughout the day and let you feel a little fuller.

3rd Tip for Christmas

Portion sizes. Watch your portion sizes: treat yourself to a nice drink, dessert, piece of chocolate or sweets without guilt, but always watch your portion size. Go for small portions. This way you can sample all the different foods without the guilt. Moderation is always the key.

4th Tip for Christmas

Don't go to a party hungry Don't go to a party hungry: we often eat faster and overeat when we are hungry - therefore eat a wholesome breakfast and lunch on the day to avoid overeating at the party. Look for the healthy options when you go to the party and avoid those calorie filled snacks.

5th Tip for Christmas

Choose Healthy Fats. Make a conscious choice to limit high fat items: Turkey meat is a lower fat choice for Christmas dinner; traditionally goose was eaten but is much higher in fat. Avoid all the high fat food such as fried food, sauces, cream-based soup, cheese-filled casseroles, pies, processed meats, sausages, and some pastries.

6th Tip for Christmas

Fill up on lots of vegetables. Serve Christmas dinner with heaps of veg for a balanced meal, which helps towards the target of at least five fruit and vegetables a day. Fruit and veggies are a good source of nutrients and they contain hardly any fat! Steam rather than boil as this helps to preserve precious vitamins & minerals.

7th Tip for Christmas

Christmas pudding. When it comes to the traditional Christmas pudding, for a healthy change, instead of serving it with brandy butter, try some natural yoghurt or creme fraiche. Or alternatively have some fresh fruit instead. If you're having sweet treats like cakes, mince pies and puddings, try having them in smaller amounts instead.

8th Tip for Christmas

Alcohol. Remember wine and beer are high in sugar and calories. Replace one drink with water, so if you would normally consumed 4 glasses of wine, try drinking 2 glasses and replace the other 2 with water or have a spritzer. Spirits with a diet mixer will reduce the calories intake.

9th Tip for Christmas

Exercise. Get some exercise. You've eaten a big Christmas dinner, now all you want to do is sit in front of the telly. Don't. Allow time for your dinner to digest and then go for a brisk walk and work off some of those calories. You'll feel better for it.

10th Tip for Christmas

Turkey Risotto. Perfect for using up any leftover turkey or chicken

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 125g/4oz turkey breast, diced
- 150g/5oz easy-cook brown rice
- 2 chicken stock cubes dissolved in 1 litre/1¾ pints boiling water
- 1 small pinch of saffron strands, crushed
- 1 celery stick, sliced
- 1 small red pepper, cored, deseeded and chopped
- 75g/3oz frozen peas
- 1 tablespoon low-fat crème fraîche

Method:

1. Heat the olive oil in a pan. Add the onion and garlic and fry lightly. Add the diced turkey breast and cook for 3 minutes.
2. Add the rice, chicken stock, saffron, celery and red pepper and bring to the boil. Simmer, uncovered, for about 15 minutes. Add more water if necessary.
3. Finally, add the peas and cook for a further 10 minutes. Stir in the crème fraîche, season with salt and black pepper and serve.
4. Calories 463 Fat 9g

11th Tip for Christmas

Recipe substitutions

If you are the chef of the party - try some low-fat substitutions

2 egg whites - instead of 1 whole egg

Low fat plain yogurt or low fat sour cream - instead of sour cream

Skim or 1% - instead of full cream milk

Frozen yogurt - instead of ice cream

2 tablespoons flour whisked into 2 cups non-fat milk - instead of heavy cream (not for whipping)

Low-fat cheese (non-fat cheese does not melt well if using in cooking or baking) - instead of cheese

12th Tip for Christmas

Make it a real family occasion. Christmas is all about family and being able to enjoy some quality time with your family and children, so, make the evening fun and interesting by involving the whole family in some interesting and interactive games or maybe ask the kids to put on a play instead of watching the TV.