

Holiday meals don't have to be expensive

You don't have to spend a lot of money to make Christmas a special day. Christmas dinner can still be special, even if you have to count your food dollars carefully. Buy larger cuts of ham or turkey than you will need and use the leftovers creatively to feed the family for several meals.

You can substitute a variety of fruit breads for the more expensive traditional fruitcake. Cranberries, apples and pumpkin are in season — and all make tasty breads.

The cost of entertaining can be reduced in several ways. If you plan to serve alcoholic beverages, why not have a hot spiced cider or wine bowl instead of a variety of drinks and liquor. You needn't serve expensive hors d'oeuvres, either. A large vegetable

platter with an easy-to-prepare dip, such as sour cream and onion soup mix, will serve the purpose just as well. Remember, too, that the way the table is set will contribute greatly to the festivity of the occasion.

What about presents? Many people are relying on their creative skills and kitchens to make inexpensive homemade gifts. Try making herb vinegars, home-canned relishes, chutneys and preserves from frozen fruits of this summer's harvest. A variety of fruit-leather rolls are easy to make in your oven.

For further information about this and other homemade items, call the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service at 858-0904.

Holiday diets needn't be blah

The holidays can be particularly trying if the types of foods you can eat are limited. People with diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease may find it hard to resist certain foods that aren't normally allowed on their special diets. Fortunately, with just a few adjustments in the regular holiday menu, special dieters can stay on their prescribed diets and enjoy a happy and healthy holiday season.

Low-sodium diets may be prescribed for a variety of reasons, including high blood pressure, alcoholic liver disease and congestive heart failure. Most of us consume more sodium than we need anyway, so decreasing intake can't hurt. Try

making these low sodium substitutions as you plan your holiday meals:

- Natural cheese instead of processed cheese.
- Squares of bread instead of salty snack crackers.
- Dry white wine instead of a Bloody Mary.
- Lemon juice, poultry seasoning or oil instead of meat tenderizer, seasoned salt or salt pork.
- Pork roast instead of ham.

"Cheating" on a diabetic diet can show up in a number of ways — spot checks may indicate more sugar than usual in the urine, blood sugar levels may go up and symptoms of hyperglycemia (headache, thirst, nausea, vomiting, excessive urination) may occur.

The best way to get back on track is to follow your prescribed diet. Here are some suggestions that will make holiday meals easier for diabetics:

- Mashed sweet potatoes instead of candied yams.
- Whole cooked fresh cranberries instead of cranberry jelly.
- Pumpkin custard instead of pumpkin pie.
- Pound cake instead of fruitcake.
- Cornbread instead of stollen (German Christmas bread).

The words cholesterol, saturated fat and polyunsaturated fat have become very familiar today. Concern over blood cholesterol and lipid levels, as well as prevention of heart disease, has led to many changes in eating

habits the low-fat way. Here are some ways to get started:

- Turkey instead of ham or roast beef.
- Eggnog with imitation eggs.
- Tacos with chicken and mozzarella cheese instead of with beef and cheddar cheese.
- Pretzels and plain popcorn instead of corn chips and potato chips.
- Cocoa powder and plain popcorn instead of corn chips and potato chips.

Remember with a little planning, special diets can easily be adjusted for special holidays. Staying on your prescribed diet and doing your best to keep off unwanted pounds will make this holiday season a happy and healthy one.



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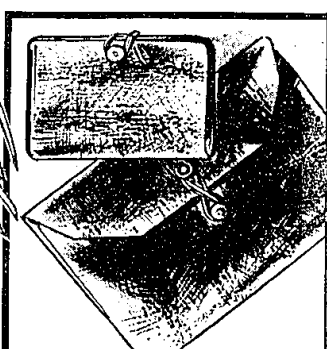
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