

# Create a peaceful holiday season



The time from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day can be a challenge to your sense of well-being. Planning ahead can help you create a peaceful holiday season.

## Holiday to-do list

- **Stick to your normal routine.** Continue to do your workouts, get enough sleep and make healthy food choices. One day — or a few days — of unhealthy choices doesn't mean you should give up for the whole season. Get yourself back on track and keep trying.
- **Wash your hands.** This is a simple self-care tip that can help keep illness away. You are in contact with more people during the holidays, so you are exposed to more germs.
- **Be realistic about your spending.** Consider cutting back on the list of those you buy for by picking names or setting a spending limit. Come up with creative alternatives to exchanging gifts — like doing an activity with friends or family or donating to a charity.
- **Learn to say “no, thanks.”** You don't have to go to every party. Accept invitations to events that are meaningful to you.
- **Beat the blues.** Get the support you deserve if you've suffered a loss. Make plans with friends if family is far away. Give yourself something to look forward to by putting activities on your calendar for January.
- **Be thankful.** Even if you are facing challenges, try to remember to be grateful. Helping someone who is less fortunate is a good reminder of what you have.
- **Live in the moment.** The holidays are here for only a short time so try to be present for the joyful moments. And practice self-compassion during the difficult ones.

## Holiday eating tips

You can control the feeding frenzy that accompanies the holidays by planning ahead.

- **Try not to skip meals.** It is best to eat normally throughout the day rather than trying to “save up” calories to splurge on one meal.
- **Eat a healthy snack before going to a party.** Taking the edge off your hunger will make it easier for you to control your eating choices when you are at the party.
- **Choose a salad with dressing on the side before the main course.** Select lean protein sources for your meal, such as grilled chicken or fish.
- **Scan the buffet table before filling your plate.** Then choose only your favorites and balance healthy vs. less healthy options.
- **Bring a healthy dish to share as a safety measure.** This way you know you will have something to eat that is a healthy choice.
- **Drink alcohol in moderation.** Alcohol is high in calories and it stimulates the appetite while decreasing willpower.

## Lighten up your holiday recipes

### Regular recipe ingredient

Sugar and salt

Heavy cream

Sweetened condensed milk

White flour

Butter or oil

### Healthier ingredient

Your favorite spices and herbs — think sweet with cinnamon, savory with thyme; cut down sugar called for by up to half

Fat-free evaporated milk

Low-fat vanilla yogurt

Whole-grain wheat flour

Mashed bananas or applesauce



## Start planning for the year ahead

Take time to reflect on what you would like to achieve in the next year. How would you like to feel? Is there anything you can begin working on now?

Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of subsidiary companies, including Aetna Life Insurance Company and its affiliates (Aetna).