

Family & Consumer News

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Dear Consumers:

Here we are again; the holiday season is just around the corner. Starting with Thanksgiving and ending with the New Year, American families will spend time, money and energy celebrating the holidays. It is a time of increased spending and eating, so make plans to celebrate without over indulging. It is possible to do; it just takes a little creativity.

The week of Thanksgiving is National Week of the Family. The importance of family never changes, only the size and shape as we grow through the life cycle. Find time to celebrate.

Sincerely,

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TURKEY TALK



Preparing a holiday bird can cause a major headache in some households. It is due to the fact we only prepare a turkey once or twice a year, and it is so much larger than anything else we put into the oven. Here are a few basic rules to follow.

Buying

Turkeys come in all sizes to fit everyone’s holiday meal. They can be purchased whole as in the traditional manner, or in parts, suitable for small families. They come fresh or frozen, self-basting or pre-stuffed. In other words, you have lots of choices.

If you plan to purchase a frozen turkey, look for a solidly frozen bird. Many frozen turkeys are available pre-basted, and some are pre-

stuffed. Be sure to carefully read labels so you get exactly what you want.

A fresh turkey should be cooked within 1-2 days. If you buy one at the grocery store, be sure to refrigerate it at 40°F or below.

One of the most frequently asked questions is how big a turkey should I buy? You can figure on 1 pound of turkey per person. If the turkey is pre-stuffed, allow 1¼ pounds per person. Believe it or not, this will provide generous servings with enough left over for a second day meal.

Thawing

Thawing a turkey on the kitchen counter top is inviting food poisoning. The outside of the turkey is thawed long before the center, during the time it takes the inside to thaw, bacteria's **(continued on pg 2)**

Turkey Talk Continued

are rapidly multiplying on the surface. You cannot rely on cooking to destroy all bacteria, some organisms produce toxins that withstand heat.

The safest way to thaw a turkey is to defrost it in the refrigerator. Simply place the turkey in its original wrap on a tray or in a pan to catch moisture that accumulates as it thaws. Thawing time is based on size.

8 to 12 pounds	1-2 days
12 to 16 pounds	2-3 days
16 to 20 pounds	3-4 days
20 to 24 pounds	4-5 days

If you forget about defrosting your turkey until the day before, it can be defrosted in cold water. Check the wrapping to make sure there are no tears, and simply place the bird in its unopened bag in the sink and cover it with cold water. If the wrapping is torn, place the turkey in another plastic bag, close securely, and then place in water. The catch here, is to change the water frequently so

it stays cold, the National Turkey Federation recommends every 30 minutes. Your turkey will defrost according to size.

8 to 12 pounds	4-6 hours
12 to 16 pounds	6-9 hours
16 to 20 pounds	9-11 hours
20 to 24 pounds	11-12 hours

NEVER defrost a frozen pre-stuffed turkey. These birds go directly from the freezer to the oven and come with instructions on preparation.

Roasting

If you must stuff your turkey, do so just before putting it in the oven. Ingredients can be chopped the day before, covered and store in the refrigerator. Mix dry and perishable ingredients together when you are ready to put the bird in the oven. The cavities of the bird should be lightly stuffed, because it expands as it cooks. Remove the stuffing immediately after the bird is taken out of the oven.

It is much easier to bake your stuffing in a separate

casserole dish. You save time in preparation, avoid raw juice dripping through your stuffing as it cooks and you cut cooking time.

Buffet Entertaining

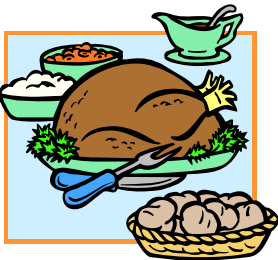
Holiday buffets are fun, but require extra care in preparing, storing and serving food. Keep buffet servings small and replenish the serving dishes as needed, directly from the stove or refrigerator.

You may want to use heated serving units such as hot trays or chafing dishes to keep food hot. Two hours is the time limit for all food to be out regardless of a heated or chilled serving unit. Food needs to be divided into small containers and stored in the refrigerator.

Source: U.S.D.A.



DIABETES: DEALING WITH THE HOLIDAYS



Holiday time can be full of food temptations. Busy schedules make it hard

to work in regular exercise and healthy meals. But don't despair. Connie Crawley, R.D. and State Specialist with Georgia Extension reminds us with a little planning, you can enjoy the holidays.

What You Can Do Ahead of Time:

◆ Know your diabetic meal plan. Then you will know what and how much to eat when you are dining away from home.

- ◆ Prepare, portion and freeze ahead meals that are low in sugar, fat and sodium. Then you can reheat them quickly when you are very busy.
- ◆ Schedule your exercise before you schedule holiday activities. Be flexible, but if you don't plan exercise time, it won't happen.
- ◆ For your own party, choose foods that fit your meal plan. Go to the library or bookstore and get diabetes cookbooks and magazines that feature healthy holiday recipes. The American diabetes Association web site (www.diabetes.org) also features a new recipe each day.
- ◆ Focus on one or two diabetes

self-management goals during the holidays. No one is perfect, but you can stick to one or two habits that are good for you.

What To Do When the Season Arrives:

- ◆ Have active parties. Plan parties around caroling, house decorating, holiday card making or walks to see neighborhood decorations.
- ◆ If you are invited to a party, call ahead for the menu. Offer to bring a dish you can enjoy without guilt.
- ◆ At the buffet table, survey the offerings before you dig in. Only put on your plate what you really want. Use a small (continued on pg 2)

DIABETES CONTINUED

plate and leave plenty of space around your portions. Then sit down and eat away from the food. Don't go back for seconds.

- ◆ Never drink alcohol without your doctor's permission. Insulin and some diabetes pills do not mix well with alcohol. Never have more than one or two drinks. A serving of alcohol is 1 ½ ounces of distilled liquor, 12 ounces of light beer or 4 ounces of dry wine.

General Guidelines For Healthy Eating:

- ◆ Planning basic food is always the safest. Be careful of sauces, gravies, cheese sauces, cream

sauces and casseroles.

- ◆ Fill half your plate with low calorie vegetables.
- ◆ Eat a small roll with a small amount of margarine.
- ◆ Mashed potatoes tend to be lower in carbohydrate and fat than a sweet potato casserole.
- ◆ Fruit from the fruit basket is the best dessert. If you must have a regular dessert, have a very small piece.
- ◆ Coffee and unsweetened tea are free foods. Add artificial sweetener and skim milk if needed.

Source: Crawley, C. MS.,RD, Extension Nutritionist and Health Educator, UGA.

EASY WAY TO LOWER CALORIES ON YOUR HOLIDAY DESSERT TABLE



Desserts appear on table more often during the holiday season, not to mention all of those cookie trays we exchange. Here are a few suggestions to keep your sweet calories in check.

1. Lighten ingredients in your desserts.

- ◆ Use sugar substitutes ready to measure like sugar.
- ◆ Use egg whites or non-fat egg substitutes in place of whole eggs.

2. Cut everything into smaller pieces.

- ◆ Cutting pies into 10 pieces versus 8 saves 20% of the calories; cutting into 12 versus 8 saves 33% of the calories.
- ◆ Cut cakes and brownies into bite-sized pieces.

3. Make cookies smarter.

- ◆ Make cookies smaller.
- ◆ Make just one or two varieties. Consider making dough and freezing, bake just what you need, a little at a time, during the holiday season.
- ◆ Reduce chocolate chips and nuts by 25%.
- ◆ Use fat-free whipped cream in place of regular whipped cream. You will save 30 calories and 4.5 gram of fat for each 2 tablespoon serving.
- ◆ Use evaporated skim milk in place

of evaporated milk. Save 140 calories and 18.5 grams of fat per cup.

- ◆ Substitute skim milk for whole milk. You will save 64 calories and 8 grams of fat a cup.
- ◆ Use trans-free margarine in place of butter. Save 89 calories, 12 grams.

4. Make fewer high-calorie items, such as cakes and pies.

- ◆ You will be less inclined to eat too many desserts if your choice is limited to a few special treats.

5. Feature hot beverages with dessert.

- ◆ Hot beverages can be a low-calorie highlight.
- ◆ Make your own flavored coffees. Try adding ground cinnamon, pure vanilla or almond extract to the coffee.
- ◆ Use lower-calorie condiments such as fat-free half and half, fat-free whipped cream, orange zest, cinnamon sticks and non-nutritive sweeteners.

6. Offer your guests a variety of fresh fruits with dessert.

- ◆ Serve grapes, oranges, pears and a variety of colors from fruits in season.
- ◆ Place whole items in a bowl and put sliced fruits on holiday platters.

Source: Communicating Food for Health, October 2005

CONTROL YOUR HOLIDAY CREDIT SPENDING



Holidays should be a joyful time for you and your family. For many families it's difficult to find extra cash to pay for holiday expenses and times are especially hard this year. Using credit cards may seem like your solving the problem, but it can create other problems, like monthly payments for the next year. Start by making a written plan for holiday spending and gift giving. Think about how much you can afford to spend on gifts, decoration, holiday meals, and travel.

Set a spending limit for gifts for each person. Include limits on other items in your spending plan. Start looking for bargains early. If it's been a tough year for you, think about cutting back on what you usually spend. Talk with friends and family about not exchanging gifts, drawing names so you give

fewer gifts, or setting dollar limits on gifts.

If you need or want to use a credit card, pick just one to use for your holiday spending; it's easier to control your spending with one card. Write your spending limit on an envelope and subtract it from your limit. Put the receipts in the envelope. When you've reached your limit, stop using your credit card!

Try to separate shopping trips from spending trips. Make one trip to compare prices and value but don't take along your checkbook or credit cards. When you've decided what you can afford to buy, go back to make the purchases.

Ways to cut holiday costs:

- ◆ Set realistic limits. Remember, it is the thought that counts, not the price tag.
- ◆ Shop early, take advantage of sales, and avoid impulse buys.
- ◆ Keep track of the costs and know what bills will be

arriving.

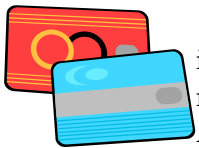
- ◆ Make gifts by hand or give gift certificates promising your time and talents.
- ◆ Have friends or family over for dessert rather than for a meal.
- ◆ Make your own decorations.
- ◆ The gift that each of us remembers as most special is usually one that involved someone's time and thought, not large amounts of money.

Skip the credit card offers. During the holidays, your credit card company may offer to let you skip a payment or two. Or, it may invite you to pay back only the minimum or even reduce your minimum payment. Don't be tempted to take these offers since you'll pay more in the long run.

Stick to your plan. The best gifts are those that do not burden you with debt into the next year. Make a plan and stick to it.

Source: University of Illinois Extension and UF Extension

PROTECT YOUR CREDIT CARDS DURING THE HOLIDAYS



Using credit cards is a way of life for many Floridians. According to a recent American Banker survey, 80% of all U.S. households own one or more credit cards. These cards may be used to pay for holiday spending including travel expenses such as airline tickets, gasoline, car rental, motels and food. In addition credit cards may also be used to purchase gifts and to mail those gifts.

Credit cards are convenient. You are not required to carry as much cash with you. Gifts can be purchased that would not be possible if you had to pay cash on the line. Sometimes it's easier to

return items purchased on credit.

Payments are delayed for about a month and, in most cases, no finance charges are assessed if the bill is paid in full when due.

However, an annual fee is often charged for the privilege of using a credit card.

If you plan to rent a car this holiday season and use a credit card to pay the bill, you may not need to purchase "collision damage waiver insurance." That is if you wreck the rental car, the card issuer may carry insurance to cover any liability that may be yours that is not covered by your own automobile insurance. Check it out before you rent a car. Does the credit card you will be using to pay

for the rental car provide this automatic insurance on automobile rentals?

There are also disadvantages of using credit cards. In the excitement surrounding the holiday season it is easy to overspend. Another disadvantage is that credit cards can be lost or stolen. To reduce the risk that your credit card will be lost or stolen this holiday season follow these tips:

- ✓ Keep your credit cards on your person. Don't leave them in the glove compartment of your car and don't put them in our luggage when you are traveling.
- ✓ Carry your credit cards so that you will know where they are at all times.

WHAT CHILDREN NEED DURING THE HOLIDAYS



Chances are your children have a long list of gifts they'd like to receive during the holidays. It may leave you wondering why they don't understand the spirit of the season. It may be time for you to start family traditions that help children learn to celebrate the season without spending money buying things. UI/Extension Specialists suggest that children really need four things during the holidays.

1. **Relaxed and loving time with the family.** During the holiday season, lives become over scheduled with program, shopping and gatherings. Even when the family is at home, they are often busy with holiday chores, plans and money worries. Scale back and give children an unhurried schedule with activities at home for the whole family.
2. **Realistic expectations about gifts.** Children who only think about gifts may feel

let down when the holidays are over. Make other parts of the holiday as exciting as opening presents. Decorating the tree, reading stories, making hot chocolate, baking cookies together are all time well spent at home. You may decide to volunteer to adopt a needy family or collect canned goods for a food give away.

3. **An evenly paced holiday season.** Stores crank up around Halloween, which makes the holiday season last forever in a child's sense of time. Be careful to schedule events and activities so there is time to maintain a normal routine around the house.
4. **Build strong family traditions.** They create a foundation for belonging and feeling loved, two gifts that can't be wrapped in a package. Traditions build memories and self confidence that will last for years to come. Let children help choose and define activities that will become family traditions.

References: University of Illinois and Robinson & Staeheli,

GET A HANDLE ON HOLIDAY STRESS



The holidays are here, and traditionally we think of them as a time for friends, family and good cheer. They begin with plans for Thanksgiving and continue for six weeks or so until the New Year. While it is a time for celebration and joy, it can be a stressful time for both adults and children.

Montana Extension Specialist, Sandy Bailey, says the hustle and bustle of getting ready for family and friends can cause us to feel rushed and overwhelmed. Changes in schedules due to parties, kid's programs, and family gatherings throw us out of normal routines. Sometimes we have unrealistic expectations to have the "perfect" holiday and that can create more stress.

Although stress is a part of our lives everyday. However, when you add additional activities and deadlines to a full schedule, stress overload can lead to a crisis if we do not take action to manage our stress. During the holidays, be aware of the added stress that the season brings. Here are a few ideas to help you manage holiday stress.

- **Be realistic:** Put the holiday in perspective

and avoid trying to please everyone.

- **Visualize:** Think about how you might handle unpleasant family interactions more positively. If two family members do not get along, it may be unwise to have them over at the same time.
- **Exercise:** Keep up a regular routine of exercise or start one if you don't already exercise. Even walking around the block or taking the stairs at work can help.
- **Use moderation:** Don't go overboard on holiday spending and entertaining.
- **Have a sense of humor:** Avoid taking the small things seriously. A burnt holiday pie doesn't mean the dinner is ruined.
- **Help others:** Take time to do something for someone else. The holidays are a time for giving and doing so you can put your own stresses into perspective.
- **Take time for yourself:** Find time in your schedule to slow down and enjoy family and friends and yourself.
- **Manage the holiday "hype"** If you are feeling overwhelmed by the holiday season, avoid watching holiday programs on television or listening to holiday music.

Source: Taylor, S., Montana State University Extension