

Make It a Healthier Holiday

We're down to the last couple of weeks before the big day. Are the gifts wrapped? How about giving yourself a gift of healthy meals while the stress levels rise? You don't have to scrap all your usual recipes, just adapt them. Here are some suggestions. Instead of whole eggs in baked goods, use half egg whites and half whole eggs. There are powdered egg whites available for quick convenience. Don't use just egg white or the baked goods will be tough.

Use fat free evaporated milk instead of cream in casseroles. Use Half & Half instead of cream for baking. Use low fat plain yogurt instead of sour cream in sweet baked goods, and nonfat plain yogurt in other dishes. Use low fat, nonfat or Parmesan cheese instead of regular cheese for dishes that don't require cheese to melt. For melted cheese dishes, reduce the amount of regular cheese to half or three quarters. To improve the flavor add a tablespoon or two of a strong-flavored cheese such as grated Parmesan at the end of cooking. Saute vegetables in broth, wine or fruit juice instead of butter or oil.

For recipes calling for shredded coconut use half the amount of coconut and add half a teaspoon of coconut extract. Use vanilla and butternut flavoring and reduce the amount of nuts. Toast coconut and other nuts to make the flavor stronger, then use half the amount of nuts called for. Decorate cookies with raisins, toasted coconut or colored sprinkles instead of frosting them.

In most recipes for baked goods you can reduce the amount of oil to half, and add applesauce, pureed dried plums or baby food fruit for the other half. Unless you give away your secrets, most people will never notice the difference.