

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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For many families, this time of year more than any other is the time for traditions. Whether it's the pretty angel on top of the Christmas tree, the menorah in the window for Hanukkah or simply Grandmother's famous pecan pie on the table, now is when we tend to 'do what Grandpa did'. Honoring and cherishing the memories of our families' past is how we stay connected. So as you consider what you'll do and eat this holiday season, think about the traditions you'd like your children or grandchildren to remember. Plan a memorable event you think you'll be able to repeat year after year to build a tradition for them. And plan a menu of healthy foods so they'll have more years to enjoy their traditions.

Do you have a list of recipes in your head and heart all ready, that the holidays just aren't right without them? If so, take a look to see if there are ways to tweak them into a healthier form. Sure, we all know we could use whole wheat pasta instead of white spaghetti. That's a good start, but there will be a lot more than spaghetti on the table. Here are some other ideas to improve the quality without wrecking the flavor on your traditions.

For many recipes the biggest problem is the fat. Too much fat, mostly saturated fat, either can make a tasty dish into a time bomb for the heart. So start by cutting back a little on the fat. Note: It's not that you need to eliminate the fat! Many recipes need some fat, and everybody needs some fat in their diet. So don't try to get rid of it all. But

where you can, cut it back, especially the saturated fat.

If the recipe calls for cream, use at least half evaporated skim milk. If it calls for whole milk, use skim or 1% milk plus some extra powdered non-fat milk to add some body. Choose reduced fat cheeses, and use those with stronger flavors. You'll need less extra sharp cheese to provide enough flavor, so reduce the amount. Don't over-cook low fat cheeses or they'll get tough.

Choose lower fat cuts or types of meats too. Low fat turkey bacon or sausage add just as much flavor with much less fat compared to regular bacon or sausage. Canadian bacon is another lower fat option.

In many recipes you can exchange 1 whole egg for 2 egg whites. If you can't stand to throw egg yolks down the drain either get liquid egg substitute or a carton of powdered egg whites. They take a few minutes to mix but the end results are just as good, and better for you.

Add plenty of vegetables and fruits to the table. A buffet of colorful dishes of red, orange, green and yellow veggies will please anyone's eye and stimulate their appetite. Add extra veggies to other dishes too. Now can be the time to try new vegetables too. There are recipes in magazines, on-line or in library cookbooks. Or if you can't find a recipe, experiment. Cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, even green beans can have a whole new flavor by simply dressing them with your favorite low-fat salad dressing. A raspberry walnut vinaigrette dressing is delicious on steamed cauliflower, and turns it a lovely pink, the better to adorn your table.

Finally, remember that the easiest way to make recipes healthier is to eat smaller portions. Make less of the tempting but less-than-healthy foods, and make sure that

everyone gets just a small portion. Pre-cut casseroles and desserts into more but smaller servings. If that's what the family gets used to now, they'll soon expect smaller portions all the time.

Here's a creamy cauliflower dish you'd never guess is low fat too. Using strong Parmesan cheese means that less is needed for plenty of flavor. You won't miss the salt either, so it's also a reduced sodium recipe. And, it will be just as good made with broccoli or Brussels sprouts too. Happy Holidays!

Cheesy Cauliflower

1 pkg, 8 servings, frozen cauliflower without sauce	1 tsp margarine
1 large onion, finely minced	2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 C all-purpose flour	1 3/4 C 1% milk
1/2 C grated Parmesan cheese	minced parsley for garnish

Cook cauliflower according to package directions. Do not add butter or salt. Melt margarine in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and garlic, saute 6 minutes or until soft but not brown. In small bowl combine flour and milk and stir until smooth. Add to onions, bring just barely to boil and cook and stir until it thickens, stirring constantly. Whisk in cheese, then cooked cauliflower. Garnish with parsley if desired, or sprinkle with paprika. Serves 8.

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