

PURSUIT

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Florida Blue 
BetterYou 

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

Tips For a Healthy Holiday Season

The holiday season is an exciting time full of celebrations and gatherings with family and friends. Unfortunately, all of the fun and food can lead to feelings of guilt and stress as you try to get back to your normal routine. Here are a few simple tips to help you make healthy choices so you can enjoy a guilt-free holiday:



Limit fat in recipes

- Use unsweetened applesauce, canned pumpkin or mashed ripe bananas to replace the fat in baked goods
- Replace heavy cream with fat-free half and half
- Use two egg whites instead of one whole egg
- Use non-stick cooking spray and non-stick pans
- Use white wine or broth for sautéing instead of oil
- Use low-fat sour cream or cream cheese, or replace sour cream or mayonnaise with plain Greek yogurt
- Prepare a vegetable platter or a fruit platter with low-fat dip
- Substitute part skim or reduced fat cheese in a casserole dish, or use a small amount of strong flavored cheese like feta, blue cheese, sharp cheddar or parmesan



Cut back on sugar

- Reduce the sugar in recipes by 1/3 to 1/2, and add extra spices or flavorings like cinnamon, nutmeg or vanilla extract
- Only eat three bites of a decadent dessert
- Use rolled oats, oat flour, cinnamon, a little coconut oil and honey for a fruit crisp topping instead of flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder and butter
- Instead of frosting cupcakes or cake, use a light dusting of cocoa powder or confectioner's sugar on top



Be mindful of what you eat

- Eat skinless turkey breast instead of dark meat with skin
- Eat lots of vegetables instead of gravy and other starchy foods
- Roast sweet potatoes with apples and cinnamon instead of marshmallow, brown sugar and butter
- Pay attention to your portion sizes to avoid overeating

By finding healthy alternatives, you can enjoy the holidays with your loved ones while staying on the right path to meet your health goals. For more tips and recipes, visit webMD.com.

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Understanding Asthma

According to the American Lung Association more than 24 million Americans are affected by asthma. If you suffer with asthma, you know how scary it can be to experience an attack. While there is no cure, there are many things you can do to limit the effect it has on your daily life. Understanding how asthma works can help you avoid triggers, prevent symptoms and respond properly to an attack.

Sensitive airways

People with asthma are more affected by dust and pollen. The first step to preventing an attack is figuring out what trigger causes an asthma reaction.

Trouble breathing

During normal breathing, air travels in an open and clear path because the muscles are relaxed. However, during an asthma attack the muscles

around the airway become tight which makes it harder for air to flow in and out. This can cause shortness of breath or a whistling or wheezing sound when breathing.

Inflammation

Over time this swelling and redness in the air passages can cause damage to the lungs. Reducing the long-term effects is critical.

Make a note of your symptoms and triggers. Work closely with your doctor to develop a plan and stick with it so you can limit the effect asthma has on your daily living. To find out more, visit the American Lung Association at lung.org.



Going the Full Term: National Prematurity Awareness Month

Having a baby should be an exciting time for every expectant mother. You will often hear them say that making sure the baby is healthy is the top priority. Making sure the pregnancy goes the full term is one key to the baby's health as the health risks are greater the earlier a birth occurs. When the baby is born before 37 weeks are complete, it is considered a preterm or premature birth. A baby is considered full term when born at 39 weeks. While there is no blueprint for how to prevent a premature birth, there are some things that may increase the risk:

- Previous preterm labor or premature birth
- Certain infections such as urinary tract infections
- Pregnancy with twins, triplets or other multiples
- Drinking alcohol
- Smoking
- Using drugs
- Being extremely under or overweight
- Gaining too much or too little weight during pregnancy

- Chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure
- Vaginal bleeding during pregnancy
- Little or no prenatal care

If you develop any signs or symptoms of preterm labor such as cramps,

contractions, vaginal bleeding or discharge, you should seek medical attention immediately. As a Florida Blue member, you can also enroll in the Healthy Addition® Prenatal Education Program. Simply email healthyaddition@floridablue.com or call 1-800-955-7635 and select option 6.



Fresh and Healthy Recipe of the Month

Turkey Shepherd's Pie

This version of a rustic British classic transforms it into a quick, easy main for any night of the week or you can use your leftover thanksgiving turkey!

For an all-in-one meal in single servings, you can divide the filling among four 9-ounce ramekins before topping it with the mashed potatoes. Bake on a baking sheet until the filling is bubbly around the edges and the potatoes are lightly browned, about 15 minutes.



Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 8 ounces ground turkey
- 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth or stock
- 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup frozen peas, thawed
- Kosher salt
- 1 pound red-skinned potatoes, cubed
- 1/2 cup warm 2% milk
- 1/3 cup shredded sharp Cheddar
- 1 scallion, chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Nonstick cooking spray

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Heat the oil in a medium ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, carrots and onions; cook until tender and beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Add the turkey and thyme, and continue to cook, breaking the turkey up with a spoon, until the turkey is cooked through and lightly browned. Stir in the ketchup and cook until lightly caramelized. Stir the broth and flour together in a small bowl until smooth, and then pour into the skillet. Cook until thickened, about 2 minutes. Stir in the peas and season with 1/4 teaspoon salt.
2. Meanwhile, place the potatoes in a medium pot and cover with cold salted water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer until tender when pierced with a knife. Drain the potatoes and return to the pot over low heat. Stir the potatoes for a couple of minutes to dry them out. Add the milk, cheese and scallions, and mash until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Swirl the mashed potatoes over the filling. Lightly mist with nonstick cooking spray and bake until the potatoes are lightly browned and the turkey filling is bubbly around the edges, 10 to 15 minutes.

Nutrition: Serves 4. Per serving: Calories 290; Total fat 12 g; Saturated Fat 4 g; Protein 19 g; Total Carbohydrates 30 g; Sugar 7 g; Fiber 4 g; Cholesterol; 50 mg; Sodium 370 mg

Recipe courtesy of foodnetwork.com