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## **Ampifying Life**

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### Choosing Healthy Foods for the Holidays

Many of the traditional foods served during Thanksgiving and Christmas are perfectly healthy. It's what we do to them that loads them with extra calories and fat. Let's review a few of the basic foods to consider during preparation of holiday food.

Turkey is a great choice for a holiday meal. The turkey breast has very little fat, is full of protein, and is an important source of vitamin B. The dark meat is higher in fat and cholesterol than the white meat and should avoid eating the skin as it has many fat deposits.

Sweet potatoes are a rich source of beta-carotene, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, potassium, and fiber. Pre-treat the pan with a light coat of oil and bake or boil (and mash, if desired). Season with nutmeg and cinnamon or pumpkin pie spices. Use orange juice and a sprinkle of brown sugar for flavor instead of butter, margarine, excessive sugar or marshmallows.

Regular potatoes are a good source of vitamins and minerals. To make them healthier use low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth or milk and sour cream instead of butter and heavy cream. Season with garlic and ground pepper.

Try vegetables in stir-fry, sauté, or microwave with minimal oil. Vegetables can be topped with lemon-butter (1 tsp margarine, ½ tsp lemon juice, and optional grated lemon rind) instead of high fat sauces.

Limit baked good recipes that call for lots of cream, eggs, butter or other fats. Fresh fruit is a healthy substitute, try a half portion, or choose a favorite that isn't available other times during the year.

Use fresh fruits vegetables or nuts and dried fruits as an appetizer or dessert. Try fat-free yogurt, sour cream or whipped topping for dips, sauces, and pie toppings.

One of the easiest to overlook during holiday eating is simply overeating. It is important to not starve yourself beforehand. Be sure to eat breakfast, drink plenty of water, try a healthy snack before the gathering, and take smaller bites, chew slowly, and savor each delicious bite. It takes about 20 minutes after food enters the mouth for the body to perceive we are getting full.

It is often heard to eat in moderation and to use portion control. One possibility to aid this concept is to choose a smaller plate. You won't feel as deprived and it allows you to consider how much you eat.

If you have questions or concerns about healthy eating feel free to contact me, Shandi Andres, at the Flint Hills District Extension Office in Council Grove, 620-767-5136 or [sdandres@ksu.edu](mailto:sdandres@ksu.edu).