

♥ HEART HEALTH

Heart-Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

(NAPSA)—Most celebrations and holidays in the U.S. involve food—and all too often it's not just the turkey that ends up stuffed. Heavy holiday meals can be full of high-fat, high-cholesterol foods—and that isn't good news for your heart.

In fact, scientific research has found that an unusually heavy meal may increase the risk of heart attack by about four times within two hours after eating.

“Overeating during the holidays—or any time of year—simply isn't a good idea,” says Rebecca Mullis, R.N., Ph.D., a member of the American Heart Association's nutrition committee and head of the University of Georgia's Food and Nutrition Department. “Yet holiday eating can be festive, delicious *and* heart-healthy. A wide variety of foods and many family favorites can be part of a healthy holiday celebration.”

The American Heart Association offers the following tips for heart-healthy holiday dining:

- Take only small servings of rich, fat-laden foods such as gravy, heavy sauces and rich desserts.
- Fill up on fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Limit alcohol consumption (1 drink per day for women, 2 drinks per day for men).
- Eat a low-fat, low-cholesterol snack before holiday get-togethers so you won't be so hungry that you over indulge. Try fruit or baked chips and salsa.

Those preparing holiday feasts can help their loved ones eat heart-healthy this holiday season and all year long by:

- Offering fresh fruits and vegetables not only at the table—but as appetizers and snacks as well;
- Including whole grains in the meal such as rice, oatmeal and whole grain bread;



When preparing holiday meals, be good to your heart and look for the mark.

- Cooking with and serving low-fat or no-fat dairy products;
- Serving 4 oz. of fish, skinless poultry and lean cuts of meat (about the size of a deck of cards);
- Using low-fat cooking techniques (such as roasting meat on a rack so it doesn't sit in fat); and
- Purchasing and serving foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Look for the American Heart Association's heart-check mark on food products to help you identify those that can be part of a heart-healthy diet.

The American Heart Association's heart-check mark is a great grocery shopping tool that can help shoppers quickly and reliably identify foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol that can be part of a heart-healthy diet for healthy people over age 2.

To learn more about reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke through nutrition, visit the American Heart Association Web site at www.americanheart.org, or call 1-800-AHA-USA1 for a free copy of the “Shop Smart With Heart” brochure.