



# Naugatuck Valley Health District

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## Newsletter

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*Happy Holidays  
from your friends at  
Naugatuck Valley  
Health District!*

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### Ways to Find Joy and Balance During the Holidays!

Feeling down during the holidays can be tough, especially since you seem so out of step with the world. Everyone else seems to be beaming, ruddy-cheeked, bursting with holiday spirit. You're feeling wretched and exhausted. But here's something to cheer you up the next time you're stuck in a room of revelers at a holiday party!

**1. Keep your expectations modest.** Don't get hung up on what the holidays are *supposed* to be like and how you're *supposed* to feel. If you're comparing your holidays to some abstract greeting card ideal, they'll always come up short.

#### **2. Do something different.**

This year, does the prospect of the usual routine fill you with holiday dread rather than holiday joy? If so, don't surrender to it. Try something different.

**3. Lean on your support system.** During the holidays, take time to get together with your support team regularly -- or at least keep in touch by phone to keep yourself centered.

**4. Forget the unimportant stuff.** Don't run yourself ragged just to live up to holiday tradition. Give yourself a break. Worrying about such trivial stuff will not add to your holiday spirit.

**5. Volunteer.** Sure, you may feel stressed out and booked up already. But consider taking time to help people who have less than you.

**6. Ask for help -- but be specific.** See if your spouse will lug out the decorations. Ask your sister to help you cook -- or host the holiday dinner itself. Invite a friend along on shopping trips. People may be more willing to help out than you expect; they just need some guidance from you on what to do.

**7. Don't worry about things beyond your control.** Remember your limits. You can't control them. But you can control your own reaction to the situation.

**8. Make new family traditions.** People often feel compelled to keep family holiday traditions alive long past the point that anyone's actually enjoying them. Don't keep them going for their own sake. Start a new one!

**9. Find positive ways to remember loved ones.** Holidays may remind you of the loved ones who aren't around anymore. But instead of just feeling glum, do something active to celebrate their memory.

**10. Don't overbook.** Don't say yes to every invitation willy-nilly. Think about which parties and you can fit in -- and which ones you really want to attend.

**11. Forget about the perfect gift.** If you're already feeling overwhelmed, now is not the time to fret about finding the absolute best gift ever for your great aunt or your mailman.



Source: [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

# Holiday Healthy Eating Guide 2018

*These easy tips and recipes will help you stay healthy and mindful as you celebrate the holidays with friends and family. You can eat well and be well this holiday season, with these tasty treats, party tricks and simple strategies.*

## **Enjoy in moderation.**

Is it even possible to eat healthy during the holidays? Yes! And you can do it without FOMO or a lot of effort. Grandma's fudge is a family tradition, and your coworker's cookies are calling you from the breakroom. Indulging a little won't hurt — so lighten up! No, we mean that literally. Enjoy holiday treats in smaller portions, make healthy substitutions where you can, and plan ahead for merry meals that are healthy, too.

## **Include lots of seasonal, colorful fruits and vegetables.**

Do you decorate for the holidays with a lot of color? Treat your plate the same way. Fruits and vegetables will add flavor, color and nutrients to holiday favorites. And they help you feel fuller longer so you can avoid the temptation to overeat.

## ***Keep Outside in Mind for Less Stress***

Spending time in nature can help relieve stress and anxiety, improve your mood, and boost feelings of happiness and wellbeing. Whatever you call it — forest bathing, ecotherapy, mindfulness in nature, green time or the wilderness cure -- humans evolved in the great outdoors, and your brain benefits from a journey back to nature.

## **Slash unwanted calories with easy swaps and substitutions.**

Learn where excess calories, sodium, saturated fat and added sugars are hiding in traditional holiday foods and beverages, and some easy swaps to avoid them. Our guide will show you how.

## ***Navigate holiday parties like a boss.***

From the obligatory workplace parties to family get-togethers, your calendar may be bursting with opportunities to eat and drink outside of your regular routine. Make a plan that will help you resist plowing through the buffet table, like having a healthy snack beforehand.

## **Sprinkle in opportunities to be active.**

Keep the inevitable indulgences in check by staying active. Enjoy some winter sports for a change of pace, or schedule in a quick walk or workout before you head to the next party. Source: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)



## ***Healthy Hot Cocoa***

### Ingredients

- 1 cup milk
- 2 teaspoons cacao powder
- 1/4 teaspoon stevia powder
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract



### Directions

Heat milk in a saucepan over medium heat. Add cacao powder, stevia powder, and vanilla extract; stir until hot, 2 to 3 minutes.

*Source: [allrecipes](http://allrecipes.com)*