

# Putting a healthy twist on holiday meals

The holiday season comes with the pleasure of making your favorite recipes and cooking traditional meals that you and your family can enjoy together. These meals may not be the healthiest, but with all of the frenzy that comes with preparing for the holidays; it's hard to find time to experiment with new, healthier alternatives.

Now is a great time to put a healthy twist on your favorites that won't take away from the taste.

"Cutting a few calories here and there by substituting certain ingredients with healthier ones will make a big difference for holiday meals," said Lori Mooney, registered and licensed dietitian at the Center for Healthy Weight and

Nutrition at Nationwide Children's Hospital. "These small changes can teach your children that healthy can still mean that something tastes good, and could jump-start a healthier lifestyle for you and your family."

Some of these alternatives include using skim instead of whole milk, replacing sour cream with yogurt and using butter spray instead of a stick of butter for dinner rolls and mashed potatoes. It's also important to substitute whole-grain bread for white bread whenever possible. Fiber, which is abundant in whole-grain bread, is an essential part of a healthy diet and will keep you full for longer.

These small substitutions will add up to a substantial



**Baked potatoes are a healthy alternative compared to fried potatoes and typical cheesy potato casseroles.**

decrease in calories for meals during the holidays and on a day-to-day basis.

"When it comes to your holiday meals, remember to enjoy them, have fun and be mindful of your portion sizes," Mooney said. "These small tricks will help keep the calorie count down,

along with any worries about indulging in an unhealthy meal."

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**Nationwide Children's Hospital** provided the information for this column.

## Try these healthy alternatives for common ingredients:

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1 cup of skim milk instead of whole milk **saves 64 calories**

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1 cup of low-fat yogurt instead of sour cream **saves 186 calories**

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1/3 cup of applesauce instead of vegetable oil (for baked goods) **saves 601 calories**

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1 T. of sugar substitute instead of sugar **saves 48 calories**

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Chicken breast without the skin **saves 102 calories**

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Baked potato instead of fries **saves 104 calories** (If you do opt for fries, bake them instead of deep frying them and save 94 calories)

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Deli turkey meat instead of bologna or salami **saves 120 calories**