

Healthy holiday substitutions can help your heart

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Try replacing sugar and butter with fruit, vegetable oil.

(HealthDay)—One way to serve up a heart-healthy Thanksgiving dinner is to use healthy substitutions in traditional recipes, the American Heart Association advises.

Bakers, for example, can use equal parts cinnamon-flavored, no-sugar added applesauce instead of [butter](#); low-calorie sugar substitute instead of sugar; and low-fat or skim milk instead of whole or heavy cream.

Baked goods will also be healthier if you use half white flour and half whole-wheat flour instead of only [white flour](#); dried fruit such as cranberries or cherries instead of chocolate chips or candies; and extracts such as vanilla, almond or peppermint to add flavor instead of sugar or butter, according to an American Heart Association (AHA) news release.

When cooking, the AHA suggests using vegetable oils such as olive oil instead of butter; herbs and spices such as rosemary and cloves to flavor dishes instead of butter and salt; and whole-grain pastas and breads instead of white bread.

It's also advisable to bake, grill or steam vegetables instead of frying them, the heart experts say.

When filling your plate, don't forget to balance it with different types of foods. The heart association suggests starting with a salad and vegetables.

Be sure to exercise over Thanksgiving and the rest of the holiday season, the experts say. For example, go for a family walk after each meal or get-together, play catch, or keep doing your regular gym workouts.

In addition, the AHA offers these stress-management tips to help keep stress under control: Plan ahead; focus on one thing at a time; and take time to relax.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [holiday health and safety](#).

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