

Million Hearts® Collaboration – November/December 2015 Messaging Campaign

Theme: Healthy holiday eating – it’s easier than you think!

Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Year’s Eve – or all or none of the above – December is a month full of parties and gatherings centered on food and drink. While many people enjoy the holiday season, it can also be a season of stress. There are so many places to be, people to see, and demands on our time. The combination of stress and food-centered gatherings can wreak havoc on our plans to protect our hearts by eating healthy. But with some planning, it is possible to eat healthy and still enjoy our holiday celebrations.

This time of the year, it’s important for those of us committed to preventing heart disease and stroke to use the multiple holidays to remind health care professionals, patients, and the public that it is possible to eat healthy over the holidays. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)), someone in the U.S. has a heart attack every 43 seconds – and each minute, someone in the U.S. dies from a heart-disease related event. About half of all Americans – 49% – have at least one of the key heart disease risk factors of high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking. Let’s focus on sharing important messages and tips for healthy eating this holiday season!

**If you have any activities or resources that promote healthy eating during the holidays, please [let us know](#).*

This document is intended to ensure consistent messaging among partners and it includes:

- I. **Alignment with Priorities of the *Public Health Action Plan to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke: Ten-Year Update***.....1
 - II. **Key Points**.....2
 - III. **Email Newsletter Articles**3
 - IV. **Additional Resources for Patients, Providers, and Health Professionals**5
 - V. **Social Media Resources**.....5
-
- I. **Alignment with Priorities of the *Public Health Action Plan to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke: Ten-Year Update***
 - Effective Communication
Focus – Prevention and public health
Communicate to legislators, policymakers, and the public at large the nation’s vital stake in sustaining and building upon the prevention and public health the Affordable Care Act, e.g. the National Prevention Council, Prevention and Public Health Fund, and others.
 - Strategic Leadership, Partnership & Organization
Focus – Public health – Healthcare collaboration and integration
Integrate public health and health care into a public health system effective in supporting community-level prevention policies and programs, e.g. the Million Hearts Initiative.
 - Taking Action
Focus – Cardiovascular health and health equity

Develop, advocate, and implement policies, programs, and practices aimed to improve the nation's cardiovascular health in terms of the Healthy People 2020 objectives and AHA metrics – addressing tobacco use, overweight/obesity, physical activity, healthy diet (including reduction in sodium and artificial trans-fat intake), blood pressure, cholesterol, and fasting plasma glucose); and ensure that all such actions reach everyone, especially those most vulnerable due to unfavorable social and environmental conditions.

II. Key Points

Be [mindful](#) when you eat this holiday season. Plan your meals in advance and watch portion sizes.

- When you pay attention to what you eat – when you are mindful – you slow down.
- People who eat mindfully pay attention to their portion sizes and stop eating when they are full.
- If you aren't sure about proper portion sizes – and who really is, these days – the USDA's [Choose My Plate website](#) is a great place to start.
 - A good rule to start is that about ½ of your plate should be fruits and vegetables, about ¼ should be whole grains, and about ¼ should be protein.
 - If your protein is meat, your portion should be the size of a deck of cards.
 - Adults should consume a total of about 3 cups of dairy each day.
- Consider keeping a food journal this holiday season – and beyond. It's not about policing what you eat – it is about paying attention to and appreciating what you eat.

Eating healthier over the holidays isn't about limiting your options – it is about taking care of yourself.

- The healthiest eaters don't deprive themselves of their favorite foods – they just enjoy them in moderation, stick to recommended portion sizes, and pay attention to what and when they are eating.
- If you are worried about overeating at a holiday party, have a healthy snack before you go. Your healthy snack could be something like carrots with hummus, an apple with peanut butter, some almonds or other nuts, or a piece of fruit. You could even get creative and make up some [spiced chickpea "nuts"](#) following the Million Hearts® EatingWell® recipe.
- If you're asked to bring a dish to a holiday party, consider bringing something a bit healthier than traditional holiday fare. Million Hearts® and EatingWell® have partnered to share some delicious [recipes](#) – and they taste so good no one will realize they are healthy!
- And, yes, you can have dessert! Just consider having fruit rather than traditional heavier desserts, or limit yourself to a small portion of your favorite dessert (rather than sampling lots of desserts).

You can make favorite dishes healthier with a few substitutions.

- Rather than cooking with butter or lard, learn more about healthier cooking oil options such as Canola oil or extra-virgin olive oil. Million Hearts® offers a summary of [healthy cooking oil options](#) that was created in collaboration with EatingWell®.
- Instead of mashed potatoes, consider [mashed cauliflower](#) – or add some cauliflower in with potatoes to reduce calories.
- Million Hearts® and EatingWell® have collaborated to create a variety of [heart-healthy holiday recipes](#).

- The USDA has created an [infographic](#) to help make over your plate for the holidays. Some helpful tips include drinking water instead of sugary sodas to control calorie intake, to try fruit for a sweet dessert treat, and to use spices and herbs instead of sugar and salt in your cooking.

Take the time to keep yourself healthy this holiday season.

- Be mindful about what you eat. Think about what you are eating and stop eating when you are full. If you overindulge, don't obsess – just try to eat healthier next time.
- Continue your regular exercise regimen as much as you are able – and consider increasing your physical activity if you have overindulged in holiday food and drink. Healthy living is all about balance.
- Try to limit your stress. There are many demands on our time during the holiday season and it's important to take a breather and relax. Consider taking time out to meditate and reflect each day. [Meditation has heart-healthy benefits.](#)
- If you aren't feeling well, go to the doctor. Many people are so busy during the holidays that they try to sweep any health concerns under the rug or they think it's better to wait until after the holidays to seek treatment. It's not. If you don't feel well or if you think something's "not right," go see your doctor. If you are having [symptoms of heart attack or stroke](#), call 9-1-1.

III. Email Newsletter Articles

Example 1

Eating healthy this holiday season – It's easier than you think!

Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Year's Eve – or all or none of the above – December is a month full of parties and gatherings centered on food and drink. While many people enjoy the holiday season, it can also be a season of stress. There are so many places to be, people to see, and demands on our time. The combination of stress and food-centered gatherings can wreak havoc on our plans to protect our hearts by eating healthy. But with some planning, it is possible to eat healthy and still enjoy our holiday celebrations.

Tips for eating healthy and staying well this holiday season include:

- Be [mindful](#) when you eat. Plan your meals in advance and watch portion sizes.
- If you need a refresher on proper portion sizes, the USDA's [Choose My Plate website](#) is a great place to start.
- Consider keeping a food journal this holiday season – and beyond. It's not about policing what you eat – it is about paying attention to and appreciating what you eat.
- The healthiest eaters don't deprive themselves of their favorite foods – they just enjoy them in moderation, stick to recommended portion sizes, and pay attention to what and when they are eating.
- You can make favorite dishes healthier with a few substitutions. Million Hearts® and EatingWell® have created a variety of [heart-healthy holiday recipes](#), including healthier versions of holiday favorites.
- Continue your regular exercise regimen as much as you are able – and consider increasing your physical activity if you have overindulged in holiday food and drink. Healthy living is all about balance.

- Try to limit your stress. Consider taking time out to meditate and reflect each day. [Meditation has heart-healthy benefits.](#)
- If you aren't feeling well, go to the doctor. Many people are so busy during the holidays that they try to wait until after the holidays to seek treatment. If you don't feel well or if you think something's "not right," go see your doctor. If you are having [symptoms of heart attack or stroke](#), call 9-1-1.

Example 2

Eating healthier over the holidays isn't about limiting your options – it is about taking care of yourself.

December is a month full of traditions firmly centered on eating, drinking, and being merry. There are so many places to be, people to see, and demands on our time – and while this is supposed to be a happy time, it can also be a time of stress. The combination of stress and food-centered gatherings can wreak havoc on our plans to protect our hearts by eating healthy. But with some planning, it is possible to eat healthy and still enjoy our holiday celebrations.

Keep in mind that the healthiest eaters don't deprive themselves of their favorite foods – they just enjoy them in moderation, stick to recommended portion sizes, and pay attention to what and when they are eating.

Here are some tips for eating healthier at parties this holiday season:

- If you are worried about overeating at a holiday party, have a healthy snack before you go. Your healthy snack could be something like carrots with hummus, an apple with peanut butter, some almonds or other nuts, or a piece of fruit. You could even get creative and make up some [spiced chickpea "nuts"](#) following the Million Hearts® EatingWell® recipe.
- If you're asked to bring a dish to a holiday party, consider bringing something a bit healthier than traditional holiday fare. Million Hearts® and EatingWell® have partnered to share some delicious [recipes](#) – and they taste so good no one will realize they are healthy!
- Yes, you can have dessert! Just consider having fruit rather than traditional heavier desserts, or limit yourself to a small portion of your favorite dessert (rather than sampling lots of desserts).

Example 3

Take the time to keep yourself healthy this holiday season.

Quick – name two words associated with the holiday season. Chances are, the first words that came to mind were hustle and bustle. There's a reason those words are so closely associated with the holidays – they are true. December is a busy month for all of us. And while there is lots of happiness and togetherness, there is also pressure and stress. Remember – through all of the work you do this holiday season, take the time to keep yourself healthy. Taking time out for yourself is not selfish – it may be the best gift you can give to yourself and to those who love you.

Some tips for taking care of yourself this holiday season include:

- Be mindful about what you eat. Think about what you are eating and stop eating when you are full. If you overindulge, don't obsess – just try to eat healthier next time.
- Continue your regular exercise regimen as much as you are able – and consider increasing your physical activity if you have overindulged in holiday food and drink. Healthy living is all about balance.
- Try to limit your stress. There are many demands on our time during the holiday season and it's important to take a breather and relax. Consider taking time out to meditate and reflect each day. [Meditation has heart-healthy benefits.](#)
- If you aren't feeling well, go to the doctor. Many people are so busy during the holidays that they try to sweep any health concerns under the rug or they think it's better to wait until after the holidays to seek treatment. It's not. If you don't feel well or if you think something's "not right," go see your doctor. If you are having [symptoms of heart attack or stroke](#), call 9-1-1.

IV. Additional Resources for Patients, Providers, and Health Professionals

Million Hearts® Collaboration Partners Featured Resources

American Heart Association

- [Healthy Eating](#) – This guide offers links to lots of nutrition resources, including tips for heart-healthy grocery shopping, simple cooking tips, and diet and lifestyle recommendations. It's a great resource for healthy eating tips for the holidays and beyond.
- [Holiday Healthy Eating Guide](#) – This guide offers tips and recipes to help us navigate holiday meals in a healthy way.
- [Seasonal Eating](#) – AHA's Seasonal Eating guide offers specific information about heart-healthy seasonal foods, mindful eating over the holidays, and a wealth of additional healthy eating education – for the December holidays and beyond.
- [What makes salt so sneaky during the holidays?](#) – It often lives in our traditional recipes, disguised in dressings or sauces or side dishes. But added sodium in your holiday favorites isn't a must-have ingredient. Instead, why not cut-down on salt and reinvent these eats into new holiday traditions? Not sure how? Here's our top 10 ways to help you make the change.
- [Sodium Myths and Facts for Kids](#) – The science is clear – our kids eat more sodium than what is safe or recommended. Our new infographic dispels some common myths, and explains the real facts, about sodium for kids. Check it out, and share on social media!

American Diabetes Association

- [Holiday Meal Planning Guide](#) – While this guide focuses on helping people with diabetes negotiate holiday meals, it offers tips that can benefit all of us at the holidays. It focuses on planning ahead, guidelines for managing what you eat and drink, and fitting in dessert on special occasions.

V. Social Media Resources

Pages and Handles

- [AHA Twitter](#)
- [AHA Facebook](#)
- [CDC Twitter](#)
- [CDC Facebook](#)
- [Million Hearts® Twitter](#)
- [Million Hearts® Facebook](#)
- [National Forum Twitter](#)
- [National Forum Facebook](#)

Twitter Posts

This holiday season, be mindful about what you eat. Plan meals in advance & watch portions. <http://bit.ly/1TdDXQC>

Planning & portion control are key to eating healthy over the holidays. Learn about proper portions: <http://1.usa.gov/1c1Y6Ho>.

#DYK: A heart-healthy plate is ½ fruits & veggies, ¼ protein, & ¼ whole grains? <http://1.usa.gov/1c1Y6Ho>

Keeping a food journal this holiday season is a great way to keep track of what you've eaten. Get started: <http://bit.ly/1XdGobS>.

Want to eat healthier over the holidays but unsure where to start? @CDCgov has some helpful tips: <http://1.usa.gov/1DCMQKm>.

Eating healthier over the holidays isn't about limiting options – it is about taking care of yourself. <http://bit.ly/1TdDXQC>

Worried about eating too much at a holiday party? Have a heart-healthy snack before you go! <http://1.usa.gov/1TdF7f4>

Need some heart-healthy food ideas for holiday gatherings? Find some here: <http://1.usa.gov/1nXaTeW>.

Trying to cook healthy this holiday season? Check out these heart-healthy recipes: <http://1.usa.gov/1wpqs7a>.

#DYK substituting spices & herbs instead of salt & sugar can make your holiday dishes more heart-healthy? <http://1.usa.gov/1MTWigy>

This holiday season, be good to your heart & reduce stress. Try #meditation – it has heart-healthy benefits! <http://bit.ly/1PO3WiZ>

Don't put your heart health on hold this holiday season. Eat well, exercise, rest, & see your doctor if you aren't feeling well.

Facebook Posts

Did you know that keeping a food diary could help you lose weight? Even though the holidays are a busy time for all of us, you can get a jump start on those New Year's resolutions by starting one now. The American Heart Association has a guide to get you started: <http://bit.ly/1XdGobS>. Share your food journaling tips in the comments!

Want to create heart-healthy meals this holiday season, but need some inspiration? Million Hearts® and EatingWell® have joined forces to create delicious, heart-healthy recipes – including healthier versions of some traditional favorites. Best of all? They taste so good your family and friends won't realize they are eating healthy! Check them out here and let us know what you think: <http://1.usa.gov/1wpgs7a>!

If you think eating healthy seems like yet another thing you have to check off your to-do list this holiday season, remember this: your heart health is worth it. Take time to plan your meals and snacks, consider your portions, and take care of yourself. If you need a refresher on portion sizes, start here: <http://1.usa.gov/1c1Y6Ho>.

It's the holiday season and people are busy, gatherings are many, and food and drink options are almost overwhelming. But you should still strive to eat healthy! Plan ahead and keep proper portion sizes in mind when you eat – a good starting place is that about ½ of your plate should be fruits and vegetables, about ¼ should be whole grains, and about ¼ should be protein. Learn more: <http://1.usa.gov/1c1Y6Ho>.

Need to feel stronger and more energetic for the holidays? Keep up with your regular exercise regimen as much as you are able during the season – and consider increasing your physical activity if you have overindulged in holiday food and drink. Even 10 – 15 minutes spent walking briskly can help. Healthy living is all about balance. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/1r4HDe7>.