Healthy Eating Outline

1. **The Holiday Season - Why is this a difficult time to eat healthy?**
   1. This is the time of year when parties and celebrations are abundant, typically involving high calorie, sweet and savory treats.
   2. This is also the time of year when getting together with family and having large, buffet style meals occurs more often.
   3. Many people find themselves consuming more alcohol around the holidays due to the festive atmosphere and variety of drinks being served.
   4. Holidays beverages, such as eggnog, are very high in calories.
   5. Also, drinking alcohol can lower your inhibitions, making overeating easier to do.
   6. This is a very busy time of the year and there may not be enough hours in a day to find time for regular exercise. Also, weather conditions may permit you from exercising outside safely.
   7. Favorite holiday dishes that are high in fat and calories come around only once a year, making them too hard to resist.
   8. Lastly, tis the season for added stress!
   9. Lot’s to do so stress level is high.
   10. It can also be a sad time for many. Overeating can easily occur when trying to cope with difficult times throughout the year.
2. **The History Behind Thankgiving Traditions**
3. Turkey or other Roasted Meats
   1. The turkey is thought of as the centerpiece of the thanksgiving table. This tradition has not changed for over 200 years.
   2. However, the first thanksgiving meal, in 1621, was said to have served “fowl”. This is referencing birds of some kind, which could have included duck, geese, turkey and even swan or eagle.
4. Stuffing
   1. Native Americans stuffed their fowl (birds) with herbs and onions. It was common for Europeans to add oats to the stuffing.
   2. What we think of as a traditional thanksgiving stuffing today is typically a wheat or corn bread base, with herbs, celery, onion, butter and stock added.
5. Potatoes
   1. Potatoes originated in South America and had not made their way to North America by the time of the first thanksgiving.
   2. The Native Americans and Pilgrims may have eaten other foods such as Indian turnips, groundnuts, water lily and artichokes.
   3. Potatoes were virtually unheard of by most Europeans throughout the 17th century.
   4. This root vegetable did not begin being grown in large quantities in Idaho until 1838! Now, many Americans could not imagine a Thanksgiving meal without mashed potatoes and gravy.
   5. In 2009, the United Nations reported that the world produced 330 million tons of potatoes!
6. Cranberry Sauce
   1. Cranberries grew abundantly throughout New England at the time of the first thanksgiving and it is likely that they could have been served with the meal.
   2. The first written mention of boiling cranberries with sugar and water to make a sauce came 50 years later.
   3. Today, the classic way to serve cranberries remains boiling the berries in water and sugar, with the addition of oranges or orange juice as desired, or taking the easier route and serving a canned variety.
7. Pumpkin Pie
8. Pumpkins and certain squash are native to the New England area and quite possibly could have been served at the first thanksgiving.
9. However, having the sugar, flour and butter for pie filling and a crust was highly unlikely.
10. The first documented pumpkin pie dates back to several generations after the first thanksgiving. This pie was made more like an apple pie, by slicing the pumpkin and even frying it, before layering it into the pie crust.
11. Today, we know and love a pumpkin pie that uses pureed pumpkin and forms a filling that is similar to custard.
12. The Modern Thanksgiving
13. What we think of as the typical thanksgiving meal; turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie, is nearly 200 years younger than the first thanksgiving meal.
14. As you can see, there are many similarities and some main differences that have occurred over time.
15. The traditions that have been passed down from the first celebration emphasize using foods that grow abundantly throughout the fall in the New England region of the United States.
16. Thanksgiving Fun Facts
17. President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving Day in 1863.
18. Thanksgiving is not just an American holiday. Canada declared their Thanksgiving holiday in 1879. It is observed on the 2nd Monday in October.
19. Jingle Bells" was first written for Thanksgiving and then became one of the most popular Christmas songs.
20. **The History Behind Christmas Traditions**
    1. The Candy Cane
    2. This traditional holiday candy is said to have originated in the 17th century. A choirmaster requested candies in the shape of a Sheppard’s crook to give to children to keep them quiet during the nativity scene ceremonies.
    3. This “candy crook” quickly became popular all over Europe.
    4. The “candy crook” made its first appearance in the U.S. in 1847, when a German immigrant used them to decorate a tree in Wooster, Ohio.
    5. They soon became a favorite holiday treat and known as the candy cane.
    6. During the Christmas season, more than 1.76 billion candy canes are made
    7. Christmas Cookies
    8. Ancient cooks made sweetened baked goods to celebrate significant occasions long before Christmas was celebrated.
    9. Many of these recipes included cinnamon, ginger and dried fruit. These treats became popular throughout Europe during the Middle Ages.
    10. Christmas cookies, as we know them, can be traced back to Medieval European recipes.
    11. They made their first appearance in the United States when Dutch and German settlers introduced cookie cutters, decorative molds and holiday decorations.
        * 1. The cookie most associated with Christmas, the gingerbread, was introduced by German settlers.
          2. The sugar cookie is a tradition from English decent.
          3. Did you know that animal crackers were originally used as edible holiday decorations?
    12. Eggnog
        1. This holiday favorite is an English tradition that began throughout the pre-Elizabethan period.
        2. A recipe with similar ingredients to modern eggnog traces back to 1604 and was used as a cold remedy.
        3. The first known recorded recipe for eggnog found in the United States dates back to 1851.
        4. Today, many people enjoy eggnog from a store-bought, carton variety.
    13. Oranges (Why do we give oranges at Christmas?)
        1. Historians have traced the act of giving fresh fruit as gifts to ancient times.
        2. It was very expensive to give fresh fruit and being able to give this gift was a sign of wealth and status.
        3. As time went on, fresh fruit out of season, even in North America and Europe, was rare. This made a fresh orange the perfect holiday treat!
        4. Today, with many types of fresh fruit readily available year round, fresh oranges and other citrus fruits are still often used as stocking stuffers or given as gifts.
    14. Christmas Fun Facts
        1. Christmas was declared a national holiday in 1870.
        2. President Franklin Pierce was the first President to decorate the White House Christmas tree. This year’s tree is from Neshkoro, WI!
        3. California, Oregon, Michigan, Washington, **Wisconsin**, Pennsylvania and North Carolina are the top Christmas tree producing states. Oregon is the leading producer.
        4. Since the 1970’s, the Kennedy Space Center has made their shuttle landing facility available for emergency landing by Santa Claus should problems develop during his annual visit to children around the world!
        5. The poinsettia, a traditional Christmas flower, originally grew in Mexico, where it is also known as the 'Flower of the Holy Night'. Contrary to popular believe, the poinsettia plant is not poisonous! HONEST!
        6. The biggest selling Christmas single of all time is Bing Crosby's White Christmas.
        7. Christmas caroling began as an old English custom called Wassailing, which means toasting neighbors to a long and healthy life.
        8. If you received all of the gifts in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas," you would receive 364 gifts.
        9. In North America, children put stockings out at Christmas time. Their Dutch counterparts use shoes.
        10. The use of a Christmas wreath as a decoration on your front door, mantel or bay window symbolizes a sign of welcome and long life to all who enter.
        11. The idea for using electric Christmas lights came from an American named Ralph E. Morris in 1895.  The new lights proved safer than the traditional candles, which often started fires by falling in the dry Christmas trees.
        12. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was created for Montgomery Ward department stores. (Rudolph began in 1939 when the Chicago-based Montgomery Ward company asked one of their writers, 34-year-old Robert L. May, to come up with a Christmas story which could be given away to shoppers as a promotional gimmick.
        13. The word Xmas was not created to remove the “Christ”. Just the opposite, the X is Greek for “Christ.”
        14. English Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell banned Christmas between 1647 and 1660 because he believed such celebrations were immoral for the holiest day of the year.
21. **How can we make these loved holiday traditions healthier?**

A. Portions

* 1. No matter how “fattening” or indulgent a dish, there is room for any type of food in a balanced diet as long as you watch the PORTION size.
  2. One portion controlling strategy is to make a smaller amount of some of your families favorite indulgent dishes. That way everyone gets just one helping, instead of being able to go back for seconds or thirds.
  3. Another strategy is to choose a smaller sized plate when filtering through the buffet line at family gatherings. This way you will get a taste of everything, without having room to pile on larger-sized portions.
  4. Lastly, fill half your plate with healthy and nutrient dense fruits and vegetables, leaving only the other half of your plate open for the indulgent dishes.

1. Use Healthy Substitutions when Preparing Classic Holiday Recipes
   1. Some dishes are favorite traditions and it is better to leave them as they are and enjoy them once a year with family and friends.
   2. However, others could be made much healthier if prepared using healthy cooking and baking substitutions. Depending on the dish, you may barely even notice the difference between the less healthy and improved option.
   3. Provided is a list of common healthy substitutions. What substitutions do you already use to make your meals healthier?
2. Start New and Healthy Traditions
   1. Offer to bring a healthy dish or treat to your next holiday party like fresh fruit and a spiced or fruit flavored yogurt dip, oven-roasted vegetable platters, or simply a healthier version of an old favorite.
   2. Fruits and vegetables are colorful and a great way to dress up any holiday table.
   3. The more healthy dishes at the table, the more likely people are to fill part of their plate with these nutrient dense foods.
   4. This could be as simple as including a green salad or a fruit salad with a meal you normally wouldn’t, or adding more vegetables to a favorite casserole.
   5. Suggest going for a family walk after a large holiday meal.
      * 1. If the weather permits, bundle up and go for a short walk outside with family or friends.
        2. Even a 15 minute walk will lower your blood sugar after a large meal and energize you for the rest of the day.
        3. Weather not so good? How about a game…charades, Pictionary and anything that keeps you moving. Even make cleaning up more active.
3. Focus on the Big Picture
   1. Enjoy the holiday parties and family meals.
   2. These only come around once a year and yes, eating is a part of the social event, but it’s not the main event! Don’t let the party eating habits follow you back to your regular schedule.
   3. Try sneaking in extra fruits, vegetables and whole grains when you are not at holiday events.
   4. It’s also a good time to remember that most people are trying to watch what and how much they eat. Some may even be trying hard! Keep the temptations to a minimum because everyone’s health depends on it.
   5. Enjoy your family and friends more than the buffet!
      1. For many, this time of the year is the only time we see certain loved ones.
      2. Remember to take advantage of this and get engaged in conversations, card games or other activities away from the snacks and sweets.
   6. If you overeat at parties or large meals, don’t despair!
      1. It is important not to be too hard on yourself when trying to eat healthy throughout the holiday season. For some, the guilt of overeating often leads to more overeating.
      2. Everyone is going to over-indulge once in a while. What is MOST important is not allowing this to turn into a habit.
      3. Focus on making the next meal or day a healthier one!
4. Activities
   1. Ask people to name a holiday food you aren’t willing to change.
   2. Ask them to name a holiday food you are willing to change.
   3. Sample several new recipes and some modified recipes.
   4. Show pictures of the MyPlate concept and explain how we might go about increasing fruits/vegetables during the holidays without having everyone realize it!
      1. Make a few less portions of mashed potatoes, and stuffing while adding a colorful fruit salad and greens salad to the table.
      2. Set out fresh veggies before the meal to reduce binging during the meal. (lots of great recipes for low calorie/low fat dips.
      3. Make fruit kabobs or grilled vegetable kabobs for appetizers.

Sources:

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