

News in Your School

Township of Ocean Schools

Enjoying the Holidays, Mindfully

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- ✓ **Healthy Potato Gratin & Herbs**

RD Corner



Hello! My name is Meredith Hesselein and I'm your school Registered Dietitian!

My main goals are to teach students lifelong healthy eating habits and to keep you up to date on food and nutrition news. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at:

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The holidays are a time to enjoy friends, family and food. And, contrary to popular belief, you can have all three without putting on the extra pounds!

On average, Americans gain approximately one to two pounds during the holiday season. While this weight gain isn't dramatic, research shows it tends to stick and accumulate over the years. Luckily, those pounds can be avoided through mindful eating in moderation and a few simple strategies.

In preparation for a big holiday party or feast, do not skip meals throughout the day as this may result in overeating. It is especially important to have breakfast, as research shows that those who eat this important morning meal tend to consume fewer calories throughout the day. Include lots of fiber in your diet by eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Fiber-rich foods are high in volume and will satisfy hunger, but are lower in calories.

Holiday meals tend to be large, buffet-style and include second and third helpings. While one might not eat an entire cake, a common mistake is eating large portions of foods that are perceived as healthy. It's important to include nutrient-rich foods in your diet, but also remember that these foods have calories as well and should be eaten in moderation. Using this approach at the holiday dinner table will allow you to maintain a healthful eating plan — one that can also include dessert.

There are many strategies to help you avoid overeating. Using a smaller plate, for instance, allows you to put less food on your plate and encourages proper portion sizes. Also, start by filling your plate with vegetables and salad before going to the entrees and desserts. Eating a salad before your meal can help you eat fewer calories overall. Eat slowly and savor every bite, and before you go back for seconds wait 10 minutes to see if you really are still hungry.

Finally, after dinner, get some physical activity. This is a great time to go for a walk and catch up with family members, or play catch or a game of basketball with the kids.

References:

Stay Mindful with 4 Tips for Holiday Eating, Nov 2017, eatright.org
Reviewed by Jill Kohn, MS, RDN, LDN

Smart Snacks in Schools



Starting in school year 2014-15, all foods sold at school during the school day are required to meet nutrition standards. The Smart Snacks in School regulation applies to foods sold a la carte, in the school store, vending machines, and any other venues where food is sold to students.

A number of tools and resources are available to help schools identify food items that meet Smart Snacks criteria. See the resources below for information about the Smart Snacks requirement, helpful tools, and ways to encourage children to make healthier snack choices that give them the nutrition they need to grow and learn.

Let's Get Cooking...

Healthy Potato Gratin & Herbs

Active Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours

Serves 8



Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for the cake pan
- 1 large shallot, minced (about 1/3 cup)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped rosemary
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 pounds medium red potatoes, very thinly sliced
- Salt
- Freshly ground pepper

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400° and oil an 8-inch round cake pan, preferably of dark metal. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and oil the paper.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat the 1 1/2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the thyme and rosemary and cook for 1 minute. Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Cook over moderately high heat until reduced to 3/4 cup, about 10 minutes.
3. Arrange an overlapping layer of potato slices in the cake pan. Season lightly with salt and pepper and spoon a small amount of the reduced broth on top. Repeat the layering with the remaining potatoes and reduced broth, seasoning each layer lightly. Pour any remaining broth on top. Cover the pan with a sheet of oiled parchment paper and then a sheet of foil.
4. Bake the gratin in the center of the oven until the potatoes are very tender, about 1 hour. Remove the foil and paper and bake until the top is dry, about 10 minutes longer. Turn the broiler on. Remove the gratin from the oven and let rest for 5 minutes. Invert the gratin onto a heatproof plate. Carefully remove the parchment round. Broil the gratin 6 inches from the heat until the surface is lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Cut into wedges and serve.