

Healthy Holiday Appetizer Suggestions

Holidays often create more demands on an already busy schedule, and produce more opportunities for socializing, eating, and overeating. Plan healthy appetizers into your busy schedule! Here are some suggestions for convenient health appetizers to include during the holiday season:

- Prepare a vegetable tray using low potassium vegetables such as sweet bell peppers, cucumbers, radishes, cauliflower, and carrots. Serve with cream cheese mixed with Italian herbs, or dried dill, or minced onion, garlic and a dash of red pepper or Tabasco sauce
- Make mini-muffins for a quick breakfast or between meal snacks. Best to use a recipe from scratch instead of a mix.
- Prepare a tray of finger sandwiches—chicken salad, tuna salad, turkey, and roast beef with mayonnaise or mustard. Add lettuce just prior to serving.
- Chicken salad, tuna salad, turkey, and roast beef can also be served with low salt crackers for a quick, high protein mini-meal or snack.
- Mix butter-flavored popcorn with unsalted pretzels and dried cranberries for a low salt, low fat snack mix.
- Add chopped meat or shrimp to 1/4 cup low fat cream cheese and 1/2 teaspoon Mrs. Dash herb seasoning. Spread on low salt crackers or celery sticks.
- Roll up your favorite meat and raw veggie combination in a flour tortilla spread with a little whipped cream cheese. Cut roll into pieces for a quick appetizer plate.
- Skewers are great for fruit appetizers. Combine grapes and strawberries with pieces of pineapple and pear or apple wedges. Serve with honey mixed with lime juice and low fat sour cream, and cinnamon.
- Prepare low sodium dips, & use unsalted crackers and chips, unprocessed meats or low sodium deli meats, and fresh raw vegetables.

Caution With These Appetizers:

- Dip mixes and sauces, processed meats and cheese, salted crackers and chips, and pickled vegetables. These are high in sodium and can make you thirsty and cause fluid gains.
- Tomato juice, Bloody Marys, nuts, avocado, and fruits such as melon, oranges, kiwi and bananas. These foods are high in potassium.
- Cocktail wieners, dairy products (cheese balls, cheese dips), biscuits, nuts, peanut butter, chocolate, whole grain breads and crackers, bean products such as hummus and bean dip. These are high in phosphorus.

(Provided by Kathy Reynolds, Dietician DCI)