



Give guests diet-wise party choices

Thanksgiving formally kicks off the holiday season here in Hawaii. For many people, the holiday season means eating more “party-type” foods than they would normally consume. This often results in a New Year’s resolution to lose 10 pounds. For other people, holiday gatherings offer only foods that are taboo because of health concerns.

Here are 10 tips to help you be a better host or hostess during these holidays. By following these tips, you’ll be letting your guests know that you care about their health needs during the holidays.

1. Offer a variety of different food types. Because most holiday foods are offered in a buffet-style, offering a wide variety is fairly easy. The wider the variety, the better your chances to meet everyone’s expectations.

2 Counter-balance foods offered! For every high-fat food served, offer a matching low-fat food. For example, if you offer potato chips, also offer low-fat or nonfat chips and bite-sized fresh vegetables. If nuts are served, offer both salted and unsalted versions. If fowl is served, offer with and without skin.

3. Offer mini-size versions of high-calorie and high-fat foods, such as muffins, cookies and candies. Cut desserts into smaller

portions than eaten as a typical meal.

4. Include vegetarian or vegan options on your buffet. These options could include vegetarian summer rolls as a pupu, pasta primavera as an entrée and fruit with dipping sauce as a desert.

5. More and more people are taking medications that prohibit the consumption of alcohol. Offering nonalcoholic fruit juice punches as well as your other beverages gives these friends a festive option.

6. Include “name tags” on foods to assist your guests with food choices, especially on dips, chips, salad dressings, or any vegetarian dish that is not visually obvious.

7. To assist friends with food allergies, keep the food labels to verify the ingredients used. This is especially important for people with nut or egg allergies.

8. Ask you guests ahead of time if they have any special dietary needs, especially if they have known health problems. Ask for specific suggestions of foods that they can eat.

9. Offer smaller plates and bowls for foods. This will help guests enjoy foods without over eating. But be sure to have extra plates for those who want second helpings.

10. The food guide Pyramid can help you make healthy food deci-

sions with respect to variety and proportions.

Starting with the base of the pyramid and moving to the top: Musubi, mochi, cold somen salads, orange yams and purple sweet potatoes add starch with local flavor and color.

A tropical fruit salad or pineapple fruit punch can help us celebrate how lucky we are to live in Hawaii.

Fresh vegetables can be the perfect finger food and add crunch to the meal.

Lower-fat or nonfat cheeses along with your regular fare and nonfat milk for coffee or tea give guests real health choices.

Meats, poultry, bean or tofu dishes meet protein requirements.

Not to be forgotten – make sure there are as many choices of low-fat foods as there are high-fat foods – especially with chips, dips, salad dressings, and desserts.

It is important for guests with special dietary requirements to remember to inform their host or hostess about their needs. And if you think there may not be foods appropriate for you, take the initiative and bring a suitable dish to add to the party.

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