

# HealthCents

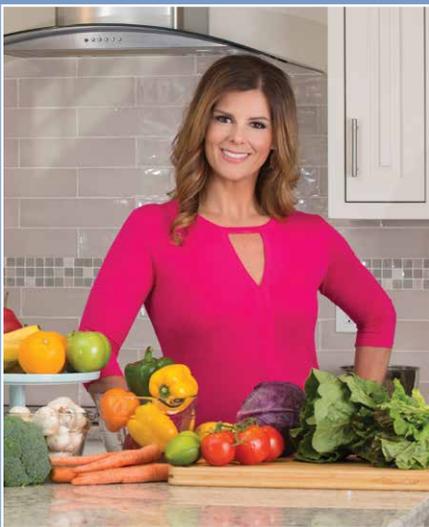
Healthful, affordable options for your family



Holiday Cookie Swap • Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice • Big Game Bash

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## Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle



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*Disclaimer: The food and nutrition advice in this newsletter is not meant to take the place of your primary care physician. We recommend that you ask your health care provider or registered dietitian for further information specific to your needs.*

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## How to Eat Healthy-ish Throughout the Holidays

Let's be honest, the holidays are not the time to be counting calories and having food and body image anxiety. Don't get me wrong, I am not promoting binge eating for five weeks straight, but cut yourself some slack. Holiday time brings its own stressors, and what to eat shouldn't be one of them.

With that said, it's still important to keep the concepts of mindful eating alive. Remember, we eat for many reasons, and the two most important ones are for nourishment and enjoyment!

**Here are five simple tips to keep in mind while trekking through the holiday season:**

**1. Eat breakfast.** No matter how much food you ate the night before, even if it includes a midnight cookie, skipping breakfast will not help get your diet back on track. Eating a well-balanced breakfast will jump-start your day, help maintain energy levels, and prevent overeating later.

**2. Focus on fruits and veggies.** Embracing fruits and vegetables at all meals and snacks is not only extremely important for our health, it's also great training for our palate. Fruits and veggies come in a rainbow of bright, beautiful colors, with exciting textures, flavors and aromas. These characteristics are what entice us to keep wanting more – not only at the holidays but year-round!



**3. Hydrate.** The importance of hydration never takes a holiday break. With the hustle and bustle of the holidays, paired with different eating and drinking habits, the normal daily water intake often suffers. Keep your water bottle handy and filled at all times to eliminate excuses.

**4. Be mindful.** Yes, there are some dishes and desserts that only come around once a year, but that doesn't mean you need to overindulge. Take the time to fully experience the food you are eating with all of your senses, and listen closely to your hunger and satiety cues. This will help you achieve a more pleasant eating experience.

**5. Move on.** So you may have eaten a bit more than you had planned over the holiday season. Get over it! It's OK! Don't let this set you into a downhill spiral. Show yourself some love and get back on track (the sooner the better).

Happy holidays!

*Meredith*



# Holiday Cookie Swap

The holiday season just wouldn't be the same without Christmas cookies. But who has time to bake a billion different batches when they're busy decorating, shopping, and hosting visiting family members? That's what's so great about a Christmas cookie exchange. When friends gather together, each baking a different treat to taste and take home, everyone ends up with at least 12 days of cookies, for a fraction of the work!

## Here are a few ideas to help make your holiday swap a success.

### Step 1: Commit to a Date

Calendars fill up quickly around the holidays, so you'll want to choose a date and stick to it. Make sure you pick a date that's not so close to Christmas that it interferes with everyone's busy schedules, but not so far away that your baked goods get too stale to give as gifts (or lay out for Santa on Christmas Eve).

### Step 2: Set Realistic Goals

Don't go overboard with your guest list. It's standard to ask everyone to bake a dozen cookies per person in attendance. Fill your house with too many participants for your cookie exchange, and that adds up to a whole lot of cookies! The idea is to relieve everyone's holiday-related stress, not add to it.

### Step 3: Choose the Ultimate Holiday Cookie Recipe

Ask everyone to tell you the name of their cookie in advance ... it will allow you to make cards for the display table, and ensure that there are no duplicates on the menu.

Also, print out copies of everyone's recipe to share. If the guests love your holiday cookie recipe, they can make more at home. And knowing the ingredients will allow them to keep an eye out for allergens.

### Step 4: Cookie Swap Competition Challenge

There's nothing wrong with a bit of friendly competition. After sampling everyone's cookies, hold a vote on your favorite, with a prize for the winning recipe.

### Step 5: Pretty Up the Holiday Cookie Exchange Party

Set out pretty boxes and fun packaging as part of your cookie exchange so guests can give them out as gifts.

# Holiday Cinnamon Snickerdoodles

**Total time: 20 minutes; Servings: 36**

2 3/4 cups all purpose flour  
2 tsp. McCormick® Cream of Tartar  
1 tsp. baking soda  
3/4 tsp. salt  
1 3/4 cups sugar, divided  
1 cup Crisco® Butter Flavor All-Vegetable Shortening  
2 eggs  
2 Tbsp. milk  
2 tsp. McCormick® Pure Vanilla Extract  
1 Tbsp. McCormick® Cinnamon, Ground

*Preheat oven to 400° F. Mix flour, cream of tartar, baking soda and salt in medium bowl. Set aside.*

*Beat 1 1/2 cups sugar and shortening in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs, milk and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Mix remaining 1/4 cup sugar and cinnamon.*

*Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in cinnamon sugar mixture to coat. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake 7-8 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on baking sheets 2 minutes. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.*

**Nutrition Facts:** 126 calories, 6 g. total fat, 10 mg. cholesterol, 89 mg. sodium, 17 g. carbohydrates, 0 g. fiber, 1 g. protein.



# Red Velvet Crinkle Cookies

**Total time: 30 minutes  
Servings: 24**

1 2/3 cups flour  
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened  
1 1/4 cups granulated sugar  
2 eggs  
1 1/2 tsp. McCormick® Red Food Color  
1 tsp. McCormick® Pure Vanilla Extract  
1/2 cup confectioners sugar

*Mix flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt in medium bowl. Set aside.*

*Beat butter and granulated sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs, food color and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Refrigerate 4 hours.*

*Preheat oven to 350° F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in confectioners sugar to completely coat. Place 2 inches apart on baking sheets sprayed with no-stick cooking spray. Bake 10-12 minutes or until cookies are puffed. Cool on baking sheets 2 minutes. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.*

**Nutrition Facts:** 120 calories, 4 g. total fat, 26 mg. cholesterol, 92 mg. sodium, 19 g. carbohydrates, 1 g. fiber, 2 g. protein.





## Eggnog Thumbprint Cookies

### Thumbprint Cookies

1 1/2 cups flour  
1/4 tsp. McCormick® Nutmeg, Ground  
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, slightly softened  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1 whole egg plus 1 egg yolk  
1 tsp. McCormick® Pure Vanilla Extract  
1 3/4 cups finely chopped walnuts, divided  
1 egg white, lightly beaten

### Eggnog Filling

6 Tbsp. butter, softened  
1 1/2 cups confectioners sugar  
1 Tbsp. milk  
1/4 tsp. McCormick® Rum Extract  
1/8 tsp. McCormick® Nutmeg,  
Ground

*For cookies, mix flour and nutmeg in medium bowl. Set aside. Beat butter and granulated sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add whole egg, egg yolk and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Stir in 1/2 cup nuts. Refrigerate 30 minutes or until dough is easy to handle.*

*Preheat oven to 375° F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in egg white then in remaining nuts. Place about 1 inch apart on baking sheets. (Refrigerate remaining dough while baking each batch of cookies.) Bake 10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove from oven. Immediately make an indentation in center of each cookie by gently pressing with back of small spoon. Cool on baking sheets 1 minute. Remove to wire racks; cool completely.*

*For eggnog filling, beat butter in medium bowl until softened. Gradually beat in confectioners sugar until fluffy. Beat in milk, rum extract and nutmeg. Pipe or spoon about 1/2 tsp. filling into center of each cooled cookie. Sprinkle with additional nutmeg, if desired.*

**Nutrition Facts:** 150 calories, 10 g. total fat, 28 mg. cholesterol, 49 mg. sodium, 13 g. carbohydrates, 1 g. fiber, 2 g. protein.





# Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice

*Whether it is a dash, a sprinkle, or a heap, there is no doubt that herbs and spices are a cook's best friend. Not only do they help to preserve foods and enhance flavor, they greatly impact our health in a positive way.*

## What are they?

Spices and herbs are only slightly different. An herb is generally defined as the leaf of a plant when used in cooking, but any other part of the plant, often dried, can be a spice.

## How to store

Keep spices and herbs away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight. Even a commonly used herb like dried bay leaves should be kept away from the stove.

## How long do they last?

Spices and herbs will keep for a long time if you store them properly. Look for bright vibrant colors, along with strong aroma and flavor to judge if a spice or herb has maintained its quality.



## How to add

Do not sprinkle seasoning directly from the container into a steaming pot. The rising moisture may diminish the potency of the spice or herb remaining in the jar, or may cause it to clump or spoil more quickly.

Crush leaf herbs, such as oregano, thyme or basil, in your hand before use for a more immediate release of flavor.

## When to add

Herbs may be added near the end of cooking for more distinct flavor, or at the beginning for more blended flavors.

Ground spices and herbs release their flavors readily. In long-cooking dishes, such as stews, add these near the end of the cooking time to minimize the “cooking off” of its flavors.

Whole spices and bay leaves release flavor more slowly than ground or leaf form and are ideal for using in dishes with longer cooking times.

## Apple Pie Spice

Cozy up to McCormick® premium Apple Pie Spice, a delicious blend of cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice. Aromatic and gentle, yet bursting with flavor, this high-quality blend is guaranteed fresh for pure, delicate sweetness.



Sprinkle McCormick® Apple Pie Spice over oatmeal, French toast, or sweet potatoes for a warm, appealing taste certain to remind you of a hot and delectable slice of apple pie.



## Whole Cinnamon Sticks

Whole cinnamon sticks are from the bark of evergreen trees. They are harvested by peeling off the tree bark and allowing it to curl up in quills as it dries.



Use 1 stick as a stirrer for each cup of hot chocolate, coffee or tea beverage. Break into pieces and use in marinades for beef, pork and chicken.

## Cream of Tartar

The potassium salt of tartaric acid used to stabilize egg whites in baking.

Beat with egg whites to stabilize the whites in angel food cake, meringue shells, meringue for pies, and seven-minute frostings.

To make baking powder, mix 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar and 1/4 tsp. each baking soda and cornstarch.

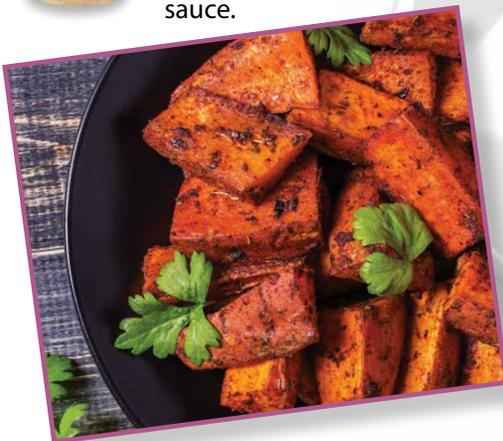


## Ground Ginger

The peppery flavor of ground ginger is a delicious balance of savory and sweet, while being a help during times of digestive distress.



- Add 1/4 tsp. to 2 cups sliced carrots or sweet potatoes.
- Use in cakes, cookies, gingerbread, fruit or steamed puddings.
- Add to Asian dishes.
- Use in chutney, salad dressings or teriyaki sauce.



# Spice up the Season

## Nutmeg

Ground nutmeg fills the kitchen with a sweet, nutty aroma when holiday cookies and spice cakes are in the oven.

For a festive touch, we love to add a dash to frothy eggnog or baked vanilla custard. On the savory side, nutmeg brings a warm undertone to white sauces like the classic béchamel used in Mediterranean pasta casseroles. (Think spinach lasagna!)



## Sage

Sage is the silvery-gray dried leaves of an evergreen shrub of the mint family. It is a higher quality, better cleaned and processed product. The odor of dried sage leaves is highly aromatic and fragrant and is characterized by a medicinal, piney-woody flavor.

- Sage is well known for its use in stuffing for poultry, fish, game and other meats.
- Use in pot roast or stew of beef or venison.
- Good in cheese spreads, vegetable soup, chowders and eggplant.
- Also good in cornbread, biscuits, muffins and cheese dishes.



# 19

# Habits That Will Improve

No one said it is easy to do the right thing all the time. It takes desire, work and healthy habits. Remember, small steps result in big results.

## Ring in 2019 with these 19 healthy habits

**1 Eat breakfast** Jump-start your day with instant oatmeal, a veggie omelet, or a fruit and veggie filled smoothie.

**2 Brush your teeth at least twice daily** This takes a total of 4 minutes a day. Your smile is worth it!

**3 Floss** Brushing is great, but it's not enough. Flossing does about 40% of the work to remove sticky bacteria from your teeth.

**4 Take a moment to breathe** Days are hectic. Heck, life is hectic. Take a moment to yourself each day to take deep breaths and express gratitude for the positives in your life.

**5 Drink water** Water is needed for every function in your body. If you don't hydrate, you will feel it quickly.

**6 Take a 30-minute walk** It may be overwhelming to fit in an hour of exercise daily, but 30 minutes is easy and still beneficial.

**7 Don't over sit** Studies show that sitting for long periods of time can be detrimental to your health. Make a point to get up at least every hour.

**8 Stretch out** Increasing your flexibility will help you with daily activities and will prevent injuries.



**9 Get outdoors** Embrace the beauty of the great outdoors and take in the fresh air. It's good for the soul!

**10 Do what you love** The busier we get, the more enjoyment we cut out. Remember, your to do list will never be done. Some things can be put off so you can enjoy the things you love now.

**11 Eat often** Your body is in operation 24 hours a day, and it is challenging to provide adequate fuel in just three meals a day. Nourish your body every 3-4 hours.

**12 De-stress** Stress can place a big burden on your overall health. Practicing self-care to de-stress is often worth more than any medicine you can take.

**13 Be nice to yourself** We are harsh self-critics. Nothing good comes out of beating yourself up. You can hold yourself accountable without putting yourself down.



# Your Health

determination to create and stick to

**14 Disconnect** Trust me, everything will be OK if you disconnect from the world for a little bit. This is especially important during family meals. Put your phones on silent and keep them away from the dinner table.

**15 Focus on plant-based foods** This doesn't mean that you are a vegetarian or a vegan. This simply means that your diet will mainly consist of not only fruits and vegetables, but also nuts, seeds, oils, whole grains, beans and legumes. This will have a positive impact on your health and our world.

**16 Be adventurous** This is all relative to the individual, but risks always come with rewards. Try new foods, new places, and new activities. You never know what you will fall in love with.

## Centsible TIP

*It takes an average of two months of habitual practice before something becomes a habit.*



**17 Don't forget seafood** Two servings of oily fish per week can significantly reduce risk of heart attack and stroke, even for those who aren't eating an especially healthy diet, according to the American Heart Association (AHA).

**18 Be kind** Kindness is contagious. So spread the love. It feels good.

**19 Wind down and sleep well** Sleep is so important. It gives your body the time to recover from the day and prepare for the next. If you aren't getting good sleep, try to figure out why: too much caffeine, stress, distractions in the bedroom, etc., and make necessary changes.



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# BIG GAME *Bash*

There is nothing like the Big Game to bring excitement to the dreary winter time. So call up your friends and get ready to throw a big bash, but avoid these four foul plays that can sideline any party!

## You Let Everyone Fill Up on Food Too Quickly

**The Fix:** Rather than serving all the goodies at the same time, think of the evening in five acts, and space the food accordingly. Set out one or two room-temperature snacks for the first quarter. Second quarter is for heated munchies like pigs in a blanket. Serve a main dish at halftime, followed by dessert in the third or fourth quarter, depending on the stamina of your crew.

## You Don't Have Enough Utensils

**The Fix:** Skip the steak and spaghetti, and choose items guests can eat with their fingers or (at the most) with a single utensil and plates balanced on their laps. Think build-your-own tacos, chili bowls or sliders. Or go totally utensil-free with a 6-foot hoagie or pizza.

## You Let Finger-Friendly Food Leave a Mess Behind

**The Fix:** Save your sofa upholstery and guest towels by putting out plenty of napkins, moist wipes, or even a few rolls of paper towels so people can clean their hands easily. A couple of strategically placed trash cans near the food and TV will give people a place to toss their dirty wipes along with used plates and cups.

## You're Too Exhausted (or Busy) to Enjoy Your Own Party

**The Fix:** Make it a potluck. You can focus on one great homemade dish and fill in the rest with items from guests and store-bought snacks.



*Simply put, Simply snacks have a great taste, with no artificial flavors or colors to get in the way. Seriously, it's just this simple: potatoes or corn, oil and salt! They're the ones that make you feel good about sharing with the people you love most!*  
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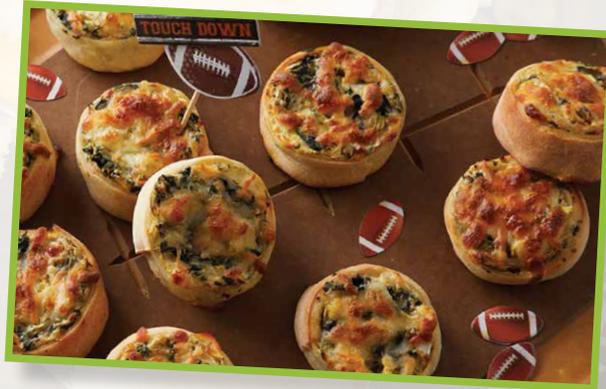


**Check our Facebook page for information about FYI Philly, airing in January 2019!**  
**In the Kitchen with Alessi – Watch Gina Gannon and Redner's Registered Dietitian, Meredith McGrath!**

## Spinach Artichoke Pinwheels

**Total time:** 40 minutes  
**Servings:** 24

- 17.3 oz. pkg. puff pastry sheets
- 1/2 cup Daisy® Sour Cream
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 14 oz. can quartered artichoke hearts, drained, patted dry, and chopped
- 10 oz. pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed to remove all excess liquid
- 1/2 cup finely shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup diced water chestnuts, patted dry
- 1/4 cup sliced green onion



Thaw puff pastry according to package directions. Combine sour cream, Parmesan cheese, mayonnaise, cream cheese, and garlic powder in large bowl. Stir in remaining ingredients.

Heat oven to 400° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Unfold one puff pastry sheet. Spread with half of spinach mixture to within 1/2 inch of edges. Gently roll up dough, pinching the edges together. Cut into 3/4-inch slices and place cut-side up on baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough and filling. Bake 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Nutrition Facts:** 74 calories, 6 g. total fat, 10 mg. cholesterol, 139 mg. sodium, 3 g. carbohydrates, 1 g. fiber, 2 g. protein.

## Chicken Avocado Quesadillas

**Total time:** 20 minutes  
**Servings:** 4

- 2 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1/2 tsp. granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 2 Tbsp. water
- 4 10-inch flour tortillas
- 1 avocado, peeled and thinly sliced
- 4 tsp. lime juice
- 1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 2 tsp. vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup Daisy® Sour Cream



In 1 1/2 qt. saucepan, mix chicken, onions, chili powder, sugar, paprika, cumin, garlic powder and cayenne pepper; stir in water. Cook over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes or until thoroughly heated, stirring once or twice. For each quesadilla, spoon 1/2 cup chicken mixture on one half of tortilla. Top with 1/4 avocado; sprinkle with 1 tsp. lime juice. Top with 1/4 cup cheese, fold over, and press firmly.

Coat bottom of 12-inch nonstick skillet with 1/2 tsp. oil; heat over medium-low heat. Place one quesadilla in skillet. Cook 2-3 minutes or until golden brown, turning once with broad spatula. Repeat with remaining quesadillas. Cut quesadillas into wedges to serve. Garnish each wedge with sour cream.

**Nutrition Facts:** 548 calories, 30 g. total fat, 80 mg. cholesterol, 673 mg. sodium, 45 g. carbohydrates, 6 g. fiber, 25 g. protein.



## Cherry Cheese Corners

- 16 Salted Caramel PopCorners®
- 3 oz. goat cheese, broken into 16 pieces
- 2 Tbsp. fig preserves
- Flaked salt
- 16 dried cherries

Arrange PopCorners® on serving plate. Top each with a bit of cheese, a dollop of fig preserves, a sprinkling of salt, and a dried cherry.

PopCorners® are the delicious, wholesome snack that makes it easier than ever to snack better. Drizzled in sunflower oil with a pinch of sea salt, these chips are made with simple ingredients for great-tasting flavor!



# Christmas Tree Waffles

Total time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

2 cups waffle mix  
1 1/3 cups milk  
1 egg  
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil  
2 tsp. McCormick® Pure Vanilla Extract  
15 drops McCormick® Green Food Color  
Confectioners sugar  
Mini candy-coated chocolate pieces, such as M&M's® Minis

Preheat round waffle iron. Spray with no-stick cooking spray. Mix all ingredients, except confectioners sugar and candy pieces, until blended.

Pour about 1/3 cup batter onto center of hot waffle iron. Close lid. Cook about 5 minutes or until no longer steaming. Carefully remove waffle. Repeat with remaining batter.

Break each waffle into 4 triangles. Layer 3 triangles on serving plate to resemble a Christmas tree. Sprinkle with confectioners sugar. Use candy-coated pieces to decorate the tree as ornaments.



## Holiday Tree Dangles

**Something fun for everyone to make and give!**

Simple holiday tree ornaments made of cardboard box material and cotton yarn. Wrap cotton yarn around the cardboard to cover the shape. Glue a small snowflake or star ornament (available at a craft supply store) to hold a loop of yarn for hanging. A creative way to recycle and make a festive tree ornament or decorate a wrapped gift.