

Eat, drink and be merry

FOUR FLAVORFUL REASONS
THE HOLIDAYS ARE ACTUALLY
GOOD FOR YOUR DIET

1 Eating a nutritious variety is a cinch People often have the most balance in their diets during holidays, thanks to feasts that include edibles from a range of different food groups: pies and sweet potatoes (fruits and veggies), ham and turkey (protein) and eggnog (dairy). To fill up without filling out, limit portion sizes, mix in low-cal fare and allow yourself one small serving of dessert ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) a day. If you're at a party, enjoy, but opt for good-for-you foods the rest of the time.

2 You're getting berry, berry healthy Make that *cranberry* healthy. When compared with a serving of other common fruits, these little guys contain the highest quantity of disease-fighting phenols, antioxidants thought to reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and stroke, say researchers from the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. Fresh and frozen cranberries were at the top, dried cranberries came in second, and the sauce form wasn't far behind.

3 A break for chocoholics Can't seem to resist that chocolate Santa? Relax! The foil-covered fella has more to offer than the gift of fat. Chocolate in reasonable amounts may be beneficial, thanks to its flavonoids, potent antioxidants that help decrease the risk for stroke and heart disease. The darker the chocolate, the higher it's likely to be in flavonoids. Just don't go choco loco: The sweet stuff is rich not only in fat but in calories. Try to get the bulk of your flavonoids from fruits and vegetables.

4 Clink! Toast to your heart As long as your merriment is measured, alcohol can be healthy. Studies show that all types of alcoholic beverages help reduce heart disease risk when consumed in moderation. And alcohol may also lower blood pressure. Heavy drinking, of course, causes numerous health problems (the least of which is a hangover), so stick to one drink a day. —*Patricia Bannan, R.D.*

Americans overestimate
their holiday
weight gain by more than
3 pounds.

Good-bye, guilt.
Satisfy your
sweet tooth with a
piece of heart-
healthy chocolate.