

News Column – Donna Krug, Cottonwood Extension District Director and Family & Consumer Science Agent

Holiday Food Advice

The holidays are rapidly approaching and that means favorite family recipes will be prepared for those special gatherings. Since so many of our holiday get-togethers center around food it is time for a friendly reminder that there are many healthy options.

I hope you will mark your calendar and plan to join us on Sunday, November 17th, from 4-6 p.m. at the Trinity Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall. (2701 24th Street in Great Bend) We hosted our first “Healthy Community Potluck” in September and were pleased with the wide variety of colorful grain and vegetable dishes that were brought to share. The enthusiastic participants wanted to know when we could do this again and this seems like the perfect time.

Providing simple whole food choices and staying away from so many highly processed foods is great advice anytime of the year. The goal throughout the holiday season should be to maintain weight and avoid holiday binges. Slowing down your eating, refusing seconds, and moving away from the buffet table while sipping on a low calorie beverage are great strategies.

I often receive phone calls at the Extension Office around the holidays, asking how to accommodate guests with special dietary needs. Sometimes it is a sensitivity to gluten or perhaps a food allergy. Or you may have a guest coming to your holiday table who has diabetes. As a hostess, you can be considerate of your guests’ dietary needs by providing some alternatives. For a person allergic to the gluten protein in wheat, provide a rice or corn dish. Make a rice crust for the pumpkin pie or consider making a crustless pumpkin pie as a healthy alternative.

If guests with special dietary needs will be spending several days with you, invite them to help with the meal planning and perhaps even prepare one of their favorite dishes. The best advice is to not make a big deal out of the differences but focus on simple whole food choices.

I hope you will consider bringing a whole foods plant based dish to share at our November 17th Healthy Community Potluck. Call me if you have questions.

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