

Healthy Living Newsletter



Volunteers of America Colorado
4915 E. 52nd Ave. Commerce City, CO
November - December 2024
voacolorado.org

Volume 20

Issue 6

Established 2005



Have Yourself a Merry Little Movie Night



As the holiday season rolls in, cozy movie nights become a beloved tradition. While it's super tempting to dive into buttery popcorn, candies, and cookies, there are plenty of tasty and nutritious snacks that can keep you satisfied. Let's spice up your holiday movie marathon with some fun, healthy treats everyone can enjoy!

Instead of the heavily buttered popcorn, try air-popped popcorn with a drizzle of olive oil and your favorite seasonings. Add nutritional yeast for a cheesy kick or sprinkle on some cinnamon for a sweet twist. For a warm and comforting option, heat up some canned chili and serve it with whole-grain tortilla chips or veggie sticks. It's a cozy, filling snack that requires minimal effort! Another easy idea is to roast a batch of mixed nuts with a sprinkle of sea salt and a pinch of your favorite spices—perfect for munching while you watch.

For some sweetness, try dark chocolate-covered almonds or fun fruit skewers. You can also make quick apple slices with almond butter or peanut butter for a satisfying treat. If you're feeling a bit adventurous, heat some frozen berries with a sprinkle of cinnamon to enjoy with Greek yogurt.

What's a movie night without a cozy drink? Try making a healthy hot chocolate by mixing 1 tablespoon of unsweetened cocoa powder with 1 cup of almond milk and 1-2 teaspoons of honey or maple syrup. Add a dash of vanilla and a sprinkle of cinnamon for extra warmth. So, grab your favorite holiday hallmark movie, gather your healthy snacks, and get ready for a cozy movie night!



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ENJOY THIS ISSUE

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who may find it useful.

**QUESTIONS,
COMMENTS, IDEAS**

Email:

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DASH-ing Through the Holidays

The DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) promotes healthy eating through its guidelines. The plan encourages eating vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetable oils. This, in turn, helps limit saturated fats, added sugars, and processed foods. One of the main goals also, is to limit sodium.

You can make your holiday eating more “DASHing” by making some of these changes while baking or cooking:

- use whole grain flour
- replace added sugar with honey, maple syrup or sugar substitute
- reduce saturated fat by using half the amount of fat, or replacing with applesauce
- use low-fat or lighter products
- pick items lower in sodium

DASH Friendly Black Bean Brownies:

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups black beans (1 15-oz can, drained and rinsed very well)
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup quick oats (40g)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup, honey, or agave
- pinch uncut stevia OR 2 tbsp sugar (or omit and increase maple syrup to 1/2 cup)
- 1/4 cup coconut or vegetable oil
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup to 2/3 cup chocolate chips (Not optional. Omit at your own risk)

Steps:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Combine all ingredients except chips in a good food processor, and blend until completely smooth. Really blend well. (A blender can work if you absolutely must) Stir in the chips, then pour into a greased 8x8 pan. Cook the black bean brownies 15-18 minutes, then let cool. Place in fridge to help firm. Add peppermint chips on top for the Holidays!

Want to start moving more but not sure where to begin?

Would you like these benefits for **FREE**?

1. Free hand weights
2. Free exercise instruction
3. Free nutrition counseling from a Registered Dietitian
4. Free weekly motivational calls

Healthy Moves Exercise Program

In the comfort, privacy, and safety of your own home, this evidence-based exercise program is designed specifically for people 60 years or more, with one or more chronic health conditions.

Only available to clients living in: Denver, Arapahoe, Jefferson, Adams and Douglas counties.

Contact **Amanda Webb** for more information.
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Preventing Holiday Falls: Simple Tips for Safe and Festive Celebrations

The holiday season brings joy and togetherness, but it also leads to a spike in emergency room visits, especially for falls. In fact, falls make up nearly 40% of holiday-related injuries. Falls can stem from decorating our homes or from holiday decorations themselves creating trip hazards. As you deck the halls and light the lights, keep these safety tips in mind.

1. Keep Pathways Clear

Avoid placing decorations, extension cords, or any large items in high-traffic areas, such as entryways, living room walkways, or staircases. Instead, focus on decorating walls, tables, mantels, or windowsills to keep the floor space free. After opening gifts, promptly clean up any wrapping paper, ribbons, or packaging that might create slip hazards.

2. Choose Stable Decorations

Select heavier decorations that won't easily topple. Look for items with sturdy bases or use double-sided tape to keep lighter items securely in place.

3. Brighten Dim Areas

Holiday decor often includes low lighting for ambiance, so make sure to illuminate darker areas where family and guests will be walking. Add extra lighting, such as LED candles or battery-operated lights, to help prevent trips and falls. If cords are necessary, secure them along walls or floors using tape or cable clips, and keep them from where people walk. Additionally, ensuring outdoor areas are well-lit can make a big difference when coming and going, especially in snowy or wet conditions.

4. Avoid Ladders When Possible

Instead of climbing ladders, consider using pole extenders or decorating tools with long handles to reach high places. If a ladder is necessary, always have someone hold it steady, use it on flat, stable surfaces, and follow safety instructions.

By making these small adjustments, you can minimize the risk of falls and keep the holiday spirit bright, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the season safely—keeping both the celebrations and the holiday cheer alive and well!

Congregate Corner

Scan this QR code with your smart phone to comment on the food you've been eating at our congregare sites.



Food safety tip:

Did you know bacteria grows the most between the temperatures of 40 degrees and 135 degrees? So, unless you plan to eat it right away, keep your leftovers in the fridge where they can stay healthy and safe out of the bacteria danger zone.

Our favorite quote from the surveys:

“Wonderful! Ignore the people who say the veggies are overcooked (IDIOTS). Love the balanced meals! Thank you so much!”

Did you know?

Our program had over 250 hard working volunteers last year at a variety of sites. Next time you see a volunteer, thank them for what they do!



The Volunteers of America is a national, non-profit, faith-based human service organization. Since 1896 Volunteers of America Colorado Branch has been seeking to identify and serve the basic needs of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community. Our administrative offices are located at 2660 Larimer Street, Denver CO, 80205. To speak to someone about our programs or volunteering opportunities you may email us at info@voacolorado.org or call 303-297-0408. To keep up with our news and activities, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and *Instagram*.

The Nutrition Services Division is funded in part by the Denver Regional Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging

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1. Gingerbread

2. Gratitude

3. Tradition

4. Snowflake

5. Gathering

6. Football

7. Thankful

8. Festive

9. Family

10. Health

11. Jingle

12. Turkey

13. Treats

14. Giving

15. Cheer

Food Safety Tip

Mold on food can be a big disappointment when wanting to serve that food to guests. Avoid causing any food poisoning by discarding foods with mold. Hard fruits, vegetables and cheeses can be served if mold is cut off with 1 inch of surrounding area.

