The holidays are known as a time for cooking and baking family favorite recipes and for overindulging. You can reduce extra calories, fat, sugar, and sodium and increase body-benefiting nutrients without sacrificing taste by utilizing these simple recipe swaps:

- Use chicken or vegetable broth instead of butter and cream when making mashed potatoes.
- Substitute unsweetened applesauce, mashed bananas, pureed beans, or canned pumpkin for oil, margarine, or butter in muffins, brownies, or quick breads.
- Try low-fat plain Greek yogurt in place of sour cream and low-fat or Neufchatel cream cheese in place of regular cream cheese.
- Instead of using only white flour, use half white and half whole-wheat flour in recipes.
- Mix dried fruits like dried cranberries or cherries into quick breads or cookies instead of adding chocolate chips or candies.
- Sprinkle salads with chopped nuts instead of croutons.
- Use evaporated skim milk in place of heavy cream in desserts such as pumpkin pie or custards.
- Use cinnamon, cranberries, or orange slices instead of sugar to sweeten cider.
- Try rolled oats or crushed bran cereal as a substitute for bread crumbs in meatballs or meatloaf.
- When using canned beans or vegetables, drain and rinse to remove extra sodium.
- Use herbs and spices to give foods flavor instead of salt and sugar.
- Instead of seasoned salt, use just the seasonings (e.g., use garlic powder instead of garlic salt).
- Use more cinnamon, citrus zest, or extracts such as vanilla, peppermint, or almond, and less sugar to give baked goods flavor.