

11 Party Food Swaps

We love awards season – or really any season that comes with celebrations and the need for an LBD and a fab red lip. What we don't love is the hit to the waistline. Try this switch-ups so you don't have to skip the diet or the fun.

When it comes to partying, you can have your cake and eat it, too. Well, with some moderations. We asked Dr. Gabrielle Francis, a New York-based rock & roll doctor to give us some healthier food options for the traditional eats you'll find on a buffet table.

Check out her top 11 fave switch ups so you party without the extra pounds, sugar or calories:

1. Swap the meats on the antipasto/meat platters for veggies and cheese. Processed meats are high in nitrates, preservatives believed to lead to a variety of health conditions including heart disease.



2. Swap cow's cheese for the goat and sheep cheeses. "Goat and sheep dairy are very similar to human milk and it helps to boost your immune system by making antibodies," says Dr. Francis. "Plus, it's easier to digest than cow dairy."



3. Swap ice cream for gelato. This switch up is a no brainer especially if your taste buds are already wired for ice cream. "Gelato is made from the cream not the milk," explains Dr. Francis. "That means it doesn't have casein, which is the most allergenic part of milk."



4. Swap milk for cream in your coffee. It's thicker, richer and can be healthier! Shoot for half & half or cream, just not the fake creamers chock full of sugar. Those are still vetoed.

5. Swap regular coffee with decaf coffee. "It helps to reduce caffeine and allows better sleep that night," she says. Unfortunately, you may still have a hangover but that's another story.

6. Swap punch at a party with sparkling water punch. Whether your punch is spiked or au naturel, minimize sugar and alcohol by adding a dash of punch to a glass of sparkling water, advises Dr. Francis. You'll get the sweetness from the sugar, the taste of the punch without the calories or the spike in blood sugar.



7. Swap desserts for the fruit and cheese plate. Fruit has antioxidants while cheese has protein and enjoying the more intensely flavored varieties generally means you'll eat less to soothe your palate.

8. Swap milk chocolate for 80% or higher dark chocolate. Less sugar, more intense flavor per bite. No arguments from us.



9. Swap breads for wraps or lettuce wraps with hors d'oeuvres. Might as well get more bang for your nutrient buck with antioxidant-rich lettuce leaves than carb-filled breads. Dr. Francis says you'll also be reducing your intake of yeast, gluten and calories. Sweet.



10. Swap whiskey and rum for gluten-free alcohols. Think tequila, gin, potato vodka and sake, she adds.



11. Swap new world wines for old world wines or organic wines. Wine for wine? Dr. Francis says old world and organic wines are made with fewer pesticides and when it comes to health, every little bit counts.

