

Tips for a Healthy Holiday Season

Since food is an important part of many holidays, celebrations, family and cultural traditions. In fact, special occasions often center around food. Consider these 10 tips for fully enjoying the holiday season without gaining weight!



1. Focus on weight maintenance vs. weight loss during the holidays. If you are currently overweight and want to lose weight, this is not the time to do it. Maintenance of your present weight is a big enough challenge during the holiday season.
2. Plan on NOT **dieting** after the New Year. Anticipation of food restriction sets you up for binge-type eating over the holidays. It has been found that restrictive diets don't work in the long run.
3. Be physically active every day. Physical activity, especially aerobic activities (like brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, roller blading, and swimming) can help relieve stress, regulate appetite, and burn up extra calories from holiday eating.
4. Eat a light snack before going to holiday parties. It is not a good idea to arrive at a party famished. Try eating some almonds or an apple before you go.
5. Make a plan. Think about where you will be, who you will be with, what foods will be available, what foods are really special to you (that you really want to eat) vs. those that you could probably do without, what are your personal triggers to overeat and how can you minimize them.
6. Take steps to avoid recreational eating. At parties and holiday dinners, we tend to eat (or keep eating) beyond our body's physical hunger simply because food is there and eating is a "social thing." To avoid recreational eating, consciously make one plate of the foods you really want.
7. Reduce the fat in holiday recipes. There are plenty of low fat and low calorie substitutes that are amazingly tasty.
8. Choose your beverages wisely. Alcohol is high in calories. Liquors, sweet wines and sweet mixed drinks contain 150-450 calories per glass. By contrast, water and diet sodas are calorie-free. If you choose to drink, select light wines and beers, and use non-alcoholic mixers such as water and diet soda. Limit your intake to 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks per occasion. And, watch out for calories in soda, fruit punch, and egg nog as well. Try adding a lemon lime diet drink with wine to make a wine spritzer and always have a bottle of water handy!!
9. Enjoy good friends and family. Although food can be a big part of the season, it doesn't have to be the focus. Holidays are a time to reunite with good friends and family, to share laughter and cheer, to celebrate and to give thanks.
10. Maintain perspective: Overeating one day won't make or break your eating plan. And it certainly won't make you gain weight! It takes days and days of overeating to gain weight.

Now go out and enjoy the holiday season!