

Lighten up your Holiday Eating

The holiday season is here again and that means the joys and challenges of holiday eating are also upon us. The good news is you can still enjoy those scrumptious goodies and manage your weight if you follow the holiday tips listed below.



- **Plan ahead.** If you know you're going to a party, fit in your exercise routine earlier in the day and eat a lighter breakfast or lunch to save up some calories for extra goodies later on.
- **Eat a light snack before you go to a party.** You will have more control over what you eat if you don't arrive at a party or restaurant ravenously hungry. An ounce of string cheese and a couple crackers, a light yogurt, or a piece of fruit with 1/4 cup cottage cheese are examples of 100-150 calorie snacks to help take the edge off your hunger and decrease your chances of overeating.
- **Offer to bring a low calorie appetizer or side dish.** Bring raw vegetables, fresh fruit or a healthy salad.
- **Focus on socializing rather than eating.** Don't be with the group that stands next to the buffet table all night.
- **Limit alcoholic beverages.** Martinis, Bailey's on the rocks, eggnog and other mixed drinks may contain 300+ calories per serving. Lite beer or dry wines have the least amount of calories. Be sure to alternate low calorie beverages like water, diet soda, club soda, coffee or tea with alcoholic drinks to limit your beverage calories.
- **Lighten up some of your holiday recipes.** Substitute reduced-fat versions of cream soups, cheeses or sour cream in recipes to lower the calorie and fat content. Use applesauce or yogurt for half the fat in recipes. Use canola or olive oils more than solid fats.
- **Moderate your portion sizes.** Limit serving sizes of holiday goodies. A couple bites of a dessert is usually enough to savor the flavor without getting too many calories.
- **Eat balanced meals.** Choose lean proteins like white meat turkey, tenderloin or fish. Limit carbohydrate foods to a couple servings per meal – do you really need potatoes, stuffing, dinner rolls and pie all at the same meal? Try to eat at least a cup vegetables or a fruit serving at each meal. Limit added gravies or sauces.
- **Be active every day.** Keep up your normal exercise routine during the holidays. Look for other opportunities to fit in extra calorie burning like walking extra laps at the mall, snow shoveling, sledding or ice skating with your kids or grandkids, tossing the football, walking around the neighborhood to view the holiday lights, playing Wii sports games, dancing, etc.
- **Don't be too hard on yourself.** Even if you over-indulge at one party, get back on track the next day. Don't use a one day splurge to start a week-long binge.

Don't forget to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night as that will help to keep your immune system strong and help you to cope with holiday stressors. Look for ways to delegate some of your tasks like gift wrapping, shopping, cleaning, cooking, writing out cards, etc. to other family members. Take time each day to relax and unwind by listening to your favorite music, watching some of the holiday movie classics, calling a friend you haven't spoken to in awhile, or reading your favorite book.