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Lighten Up Your Holiday Eating

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Spring is here and another holiday is just around the corner. Supermarket and department store shelves are stocked with chocolate rabbits, marshmallow eggs, jelly beans and just about any other type of candy you can imagine. If you're trying to get in shape for summer, control your environment by limiting how many treats you keep at home or at work. A small handful of M&Ms every day can add up to two extra pounds per month!

Many people rationalize that dark chocolate has flavonoids that keep cholesterol from clogging up blood vessels. An ounce or two of dark chocolate (that's only 1 or 2 ears of 7 ½" tall solid chocolate rabbit) may have some health benefits; however, it is also loaded with calories and saturated fat, so it should be eaten in moderation to prevent weight gain which can also lead to heart disease.

Parents often find themselves trapped between tradition and the threat of obesity, not to mention diabetes. The average Easter basket contains more than 2000 calories and 100 grams of fat. Check out the calories and fat in your favorite treats:

CANDY	CALORIES	FAT (grams)	SATURATED FAT (grams)
20 Jelly Beans	160	0	0
5 Marshmallow Peeps	160	0	0
¼ cup Pastel Choc. M&Ms	210	9	6
12 Cadbury Mini Eggs	200	9	6
1 Cadbury Crème Egg	170	6	4
8 Hershey's Robin Eggs	170	5	4.5
Solid Milk Chocolate Rabbit (7.5" tall)	1,025	65	33

Lighten up holiday baskets by giving a couple candy items and more non-food treats like movie tickets, books or CDs for teens; jump ropes, sidewalk chalk, balls, paints, card games, bubble kits, etc. for younger children. Consider having an egg hunt and hide plastic eggs filled with coins around the house or yard to keep kids active.

Children learn good health habits by the examples adults set for them. Holiday traditions can be updated to promote healthy practices like taking a family walk or

playing a game. Serving low calorie appetizers like raw vegetables with low fat dip or lightening up traditional casseroles with lower fat ingredients are also ways to promote healthy holiday eating habits.

If you are interested in finding out more information on Sensia's Compass Wellness Programs, contact John Lerand at (414) 359-9440 or email him at jlerand@sensiahealthcare.com.