

December's Topic: Healthy Holiday Eating

By: Mitchell Norris and Matt Tatum, Pharm.D. candidates



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Phone: (334) 263-8470

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Fax: (334) 263-8660

Email: rx@alseib.org

Healthy Holidays!

The holidays are approaching and bringing with them parties, family get-togethers and the delicious food that goes along with these events. A commitment to healthy eating is easily challenged this time of year but a few helpful hints may get you through.

Healthy eating during the holidays is not an all or nothing proposition. Moderation is key and a plan of action can help. Depriving yourself completely of the tasty treats the holidays have to offer can actually be counter-productive. It may lead to us over-indulging, which can result in feelings of failure and set us back on the road to a healthier lifestyle.

It is important to enjoy yourself during the holiday season while also staying on track. A few helpful hints such as increasing water intake, choosing healthier alternatives, and treating yourself in moderation are included to help guide you through this holiday season!

Not What You Eat but How You Eat!

Midnight snack: Everyone enjoys a nice snack around bedtime. This time of year it is especially important to limit the amount we eat late at night. After-dinner snacks tend to be high in fat and calories so are best if avoided.

Eat breakfast: Eating breakfast can help jumpstart your metabolism. Also, eating smaller meals throughout the day keeps your energy up and your metabolism going!

Eat slowly: Eating slowly helps us digest what we are eating better and may also help us feel fuller before we eat everything in sight.

Holiday Food Choices

Choose more often

- Turkey breast
- Chicken breast
- Plain potatoes
- Fresh fruit
- Plain rice
- Tossed salad
- Steamed vegetables
- Shrimp cocktail

Choose less often

- Stuffing
- Gravy
- Pie
- Cake
- Candy
- High calorie alcoholic beverages
- Eggnog

Healthier desserts

- Chocolate covered strawberries
- Pumpkin pie
- Ambrosia

Tips to Avoid Holiday Over-Eating

- **Plan ahead:** If you are planning on attending a holiday party, eat a high protein snack before you arrive. This will help you to stay fuller for longer. Making healthy choices is much easier when you are not starving.
- **Do not drink your calories:** Liquid calories are just as important as the one that you eat. Drink lots of water to stay well hydrated. Drinking lots of water with your meals will help to feel full. This will help prevent over-eating.
- **Eat until you are satisfied not stuffed:** Enjoy your favorite holiday treats while eating small portions. Sit down and slow down while you are eating your favorite foods.

Healthy Holiday Habits

- **Avoid emotional eating:** The holidays can bring extra stress and it is easy to turn to food for comfort. No matter how busy you are make sure to set aside time for yourself every day. Go for a walk, read a book, or anything you enjoy.
- **Get plenty of sleep:** More holiday events means staying up later. Not receiving enough sleep can have a significant impact on your health which can lead to over eating and lower your immune system.
- **Plan time for exercise:** Exercise can help relieve that holiday stress and prevent weight gain. An increase in daily exercise can help off-set extra calories eaten during the holidays.
- **Take the focus off food:** Try to focus on socializing and spending quality time with relatives and friends instead on how good the food is.

Healthy Holidays

HOLIDAY TIPS

- **Be selective:** Survey the offerings. What looks too good to pass up? Focus on what you'll enjoy, not how much you can squeeze on your plate.
- **Decorate your plate:** Fill half to three-quarters of your plate with colorful raw veggies, fruits or items that have these as their main ingredient.
- **Cut out the extra:** It is easy to fill up on high calorie snacks such as cheese, nuts, and creamy dips. Try to cut these fattening extras out.

NUTRITION WISE

Typical holiday weight gain is about 2 to 3 pounds and seldom lost after the holidays. Year after year these small gains add up. This year try to prevent this weight gain by using some of these tips to stay healthy and keep the weight off.

References

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