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## **‘TIS THE SEASON TO TRY NOT TO GAIN WEIGHT**

So when does the holiday season really begin and end? Some would claim it is Thanksgiving through New Years while others say it is Halloween and runs through Valentine’s Day. Regardless of the exact time period, this is a difficult time of year to eat healthy. The latest research estimates that the average American gains about one pound during the holiday season. Even though this may not sound like much, research also shows that this pound is usually not lost during the year. This means that a healthy weight 30 year old could become overweight by the age of 50 just by gaining the “holiday pound” every year. And those individuals who are overweight tend to gain more weight during the holiday season. With all this in mind the following tips can help you fight off all the foods begging to be eaten this holiday season.

- 1) **HOLIDAYS.** Regardless of whether your holiday season seems to begin at Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukah, or Christmas the first thing to remember is that holidays are just that- **INDIVIDUAL DAYS.** Try to get out of the mind set that there is even a “holiday season” because it is an excuse to overindulge for an extended period of time versus a few days. It is not eating excessive calories for two or three days that cause weight gain, it is the four to six weeks of candy around the office, eating out while shopping, stuffing ourselves at buffet tables, and not exercising that pack on the pounds.
- 2) **BE REALISTIC.** Don’t try to lose weight over the holidays because it is almost sure not to happen and you will just set yourself up for disappointment. Instead concentrate on maintaining your weight and start the New Year feeling healthy. If you do overindulge one time get back on track right away, don’t use it as an excuse to keep overindulging. Return to healthy, portion-controlled eating at your next meal.
- 3) **PORTION SIZE.** Yes- the same old thing you hear all year long but it is even more important during the holidays. Don’t feel guilty for having those high-fat items that are only around once a year. Just remember to take small portions and choose the small plate- small portions will miraculously look larger!
- 4) **BEWARE OF THE RAVENOUS PARTY BEAST.** You are more likely to overeat and make poor food choices when you are extremely hungry- especially when there are tempting foods that are not around most of the year. Most parties tend to start later than most people eat dinner so eat a little snack before you go.
- 5) **CHOOSE WISELY.** Peruse the buffet table before you make your food choices. Steer away from items that you can get anytime of year (such as dinner rolls, cheese, and nuts). Instead choose foods that you really enjoy. You will be more satisfied and end up eating less. And only one trip to the food table per party!

- 6) **“BAH HUMBUG”**. Some people believe that carrot sticks on a holiday party table is “scrooge-like” or should be saved for Rudolph, however, many people will appreciate you for having healthy food choices. Remember to be careful of the dip- most of them are very high in calories and saturated fat.
- 7) **BE A ROLE MODEL**. Promote healthy holiday eating in your office or among your family. Keep fruit in the office or around home instead of candy. If this is too much to ask, at least try keeping hard candy instead of chocolate-type candy. Hard candy has far less calories and fat. Compare 25 peanut M & M’s (242 calories and 13 grams of fat) versus candy cane (55 calories and 0 fat)- quite a difference! And you’ll have fresh breath! Talk to your co-workers or family and decide to have a healthy holiday season by not bringing or making “treats” throughout the holidays. Or designate one day when you share “goodies” so that it is not extended out for weeks.
- 8) **PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL**. Keep tempting foods out of the house or out of sight. Share food with family, friends, and co-workers. If you have leftovers, send them home with guests instead of eating them for days. Buy holiday-colored disposable containers and send your guests home with a “goodie bag”.
- 9) **SINFUL SAMPLING**. Nibbling while you cook can add hundreds of calories by the end of the day. Try chewing gum while you cook to discourage tasting.
- 10) **AVOID EXTRAS**. Don’t make extra food. If you enjoy cooking or baking, prepare only enough for what you are giving as a gift or for a party.
- 11) **KNOW THYSELF**. If you know that you always eat half the cookie dough or end up eating a dozen of the cookies you prepare then don’t make them. Or make an item that you can’t eat like cake or bread versus cookies or candy.
- 12) **SLIM DOWN YOUR RECIPES**. Modifying recipes is an easy way to cut back on calories and saturated fat this holiday. Most recipes (except cakes) can have sugar reduced by about 1/3 without a noticeable difference.
- 13) **ANTICIPATE**. If you are going to an evening party, eat healthy, “lighter” meals during the day (and don’t forget your workout!)
- 14) **PRIORITIZE EXERCISE**. Continue your regular exercise routine (and if you don’t have one get one!) Form a holiday walking or exercise group. Since this is a difficult time of year to keep up with exercise, accountability is key. Meet a friend for a walk or at the gym before that dinner party or afternoon of shopping. Get a jump on the new year- go ahead and get a few personal training sessions. You’ll start the New Year feeling (and looking) healthy!
- 15) **PREPARE TO SHOP**. Energize yourself and promote a clear mind to make all those important gift decisions by eating a healthy breakfast and exercising. Don’t go to the mall hungry in order to avoid getting sucked into the “unhealthy food court”. Shopping can be exhausting so get your workout in while you still have some energy.

16) **TRAVEL SMART.** When traveling (or even shopping) during the holidays, pack healthy snacks and lunches instead of relying on fast food. Remember that fruits and vegetables travel well and require little or no preparation.

#### **CALORIES OF COMMONLY CONSUMED HOLIDAY FOODS**

Cheese (1 ounce) - 115 calories  
Nuts (1 ounce) - 165 calories  
Eggnog (1 cup) - 350 calories  
Brownie (2 X 2 inch square)- 120 calories  
Sugar Cookie (3-inch)- 120 calories  
Pecan Pie (1/8 of 8-inch pie)- 400 calories  
Pumpkin Pie(1/8 of 8-inch pie)- 350 calories  
Peppermint (1 piece)- 20 calories  
Stuffing/ Dressing (1/2 cup)- 195 calories  
Mashed Potatoes (1/2 cup)- 200 calories  
Hollandaise Sauce (1/4 cup)- 200 calories  
Vegetable Dip (1 tablespoon)- 90 calories  
White meat turkey (3 ounces)- 150 calories  
Dark meat turkey (3 ounces)- 225 calories

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