

Tis the Season—Healthy Holiday Hints

The Holidays are a wonderful time of the year. Celebrations, family get-togethers and parties add joy to the season. For people watching what they eat and their weight, all this joy can present some challenges.

- Try to MAINTAIN your weight. The holidays are usually not the best time to try to lose weight because of all the temptations around. Concentrate on keeping your weight the same and once the holidays are over and then you can start losing again.
- Enjoy the season's treats! It's best not to deprive yourself of a treat you really want and enjoy. Rather than overdoing it, enjoy the treat and stop. In other words, don't eat just to be eating and don't waste calories on foods such as chips, dips and nuts that are available year round. Use those calories for the special treats.
- Eat three meals a day. If you skimp or skip meals, you'll end up eating more because you are over-hungry.
- Grab a healthy snack before the party. If you help yourself to a piece of fruit, some veggies, a half a sandwich, even some vegetable juice before you go, it can help to curb your appetite.
- Talk Talk Talk. When you get to the party, enjoy the company rather than the hors d'oeuvres.
- Follow the three—hors d'oeuvres rule. Allow yourself to eat three and only three appetizers. Some excellent choices are cold shrimp with cocktail sauces and veggies (no dip).
- Cut down on alcohol. It is very easy to drink hundreds of calories and not even realize it. Have one alcoholic drink per party then switch to non-caloric beverages such as sparkling water and diet soda. If one isn't enough, alternate beverages so that only every other drink contains alcohol.

- Keep moving. Don't forget to exercise over the holidays. If possible, try to increase your exercise by 10 minutes a day. Simple tips are to take the stairs instead of the elevator, parking farther away from the store and walk up the escalators.
- Bring-Your-Own-Healthy-Treat. No one has to know that your dessert is made without sugar!
- Keep your mouth busy. Chew gum or keep a sugar-free mint in your mouth. As soon as you're done eating, brush your teeth. No brush around? Use a mouthwash to freshen your mouth and keep you from wanting to eat anything else.
- Dress for success. Wear something fabulous and fitted to parties. Leave the baggy clothes behind. Wearing clothes that are snug can help ward off those temptations.
- Lighten up the dinners. If you are doing the cooking, you can do many things to decrease the calories. Some ideas are; skim the fat before making gravy, throw out the turkey skin, use condensed skim milk rather than cream, add a butter spray to vegetables rather than melted butter or margarine, sprinkle casseroles with grated parmesan cheese rather than a handful of cheddar, bake a one-crust pie instead of two-crust and cut back the sugar by 1/3 in your recipes.
- Treat yourself...with calorie-free treats. Some ideas are; a manicure, bubble bath, or coffee with a friend.
- Share when dining out. While at a restaurant, split the entrée with a friend or take half of it home for lunch the next day!
- Clean out your pantry. Often during the holidays we get boxes of candy, cheese baskets and cookies from our friends and families. Round up all these and donate them to the local soup kitchen, shelter or church. Not only will you feel more in control of your weight, you'll also get that wonderful feeling that comes from doing something nice for others. Isn't that what the holidays are all about?