

Tis' the Season...to Gain Weight?

With the holidays upon us, one of the ways we will be celebrating is with high fat/high calorie foods. Many of these foods signify that the holidays are here and we'll want to indulge in all of the special foods and sweet treats that surround us. For some, certain foods bring us right back to the comfortable place where we originally feasted on them. For others, it's simply a time to put our healthy eating aside until the New Year.

If this is your game plan, you may just enter the New Year with the "gift" of an extra seven to fourteen pounds, which is the average weight gain from Thanksgiving to January 1st! While larger clothes may not be on your wish list, how can you enjoy the holiday season guilt free?

One way is by pre planning your holiday eating. You've heard the saying "If you fail to plan then plan to fail." That's certainly the case when it comes to holiday indulging. There is a way to include those special foods and treats in your holiday eating as long as you have a strategy. Since you may be headed to a few holiday parties, here's a game plan you can use.

Let's say you're headed for a cocktail party. First of all, you never want to arrive hungry. Over hungry means overeating so a small snack before you go can ensure that your judgment stays in tact and you'll make better decisions once confronted with all of the holiday goodies. For example, an apple or container of yogurt (both around 100 calories) can spare you from overindulging in thousands of calories of hors d'oeuvres.

The next strategy for a cocktail party involves drinking. Pre plan the amount of drinks you'll have and stick to it. These are liquid calories which go down quickly and easily so choose wisely. For hard liquor, keep it to a drink or two, alternating between glasses of water. For wine, same idea or make it a wine spritzer to cut the calories in half. There's also the option of drinking seltzer which looks like a drink and no one will question you if that's a concern. Finally, try envisioning each drink as a chocolate milkshake. Pictured this way, you may want to reconsider having more than one!

This next strategy involves keeping your hands busy. You can hold your drink in one hand and have a plate of vegetables in the other. You also may want to try the "clutch trick." That's where you purposely bring a clutch bag as opposed to one with a strap. It ties up the hand that could be grabbing unhealthy appetizers! Of course, you may want them so if that's your choice, limit the amount to a few of the most delicious looking ones and enjoy them thoroughly. Give yourself permission so each bite isn't eaten with a side of guilt. Also, when you've given yourself permission to eat a set amount (let's say three or four), you're much less likely to binge later on because you feel good about keeping with your plan.

If the party involves a sit down meal, only eat what's special for that holiday. For example, let's say for Thanksgiving there's a delicious looking stuffing on the table that you want to try along with other types of breads and rolls. Since a roll may be something you have on any given night out, skip it to allow for a taste of that special stuffing. By having what's unique for the holiday, you'll feel a part of it without "stuffing" yourself!

Finally, if you've overdone it, apply the three to one rule. That means, for every one thing you've overindulged in, make the next three choices healthier and better balanced. For example, a meal that's over the top needs to be balanced with three moderate meals. A food choice that's high in calories and fat can be balanced with three more healthful options.

With a plan, the holiday's can be enjoyed without the "leftovers" you'd see on your belly, hips and thighs. By putting some strategies into place now, you can finally have a New Years Resolution that's different from the millions of other women who start January 1st with a pledge to lose excess weight.

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