



Healthy Holiday Food Hints

Holidays can be a time of celebrating but also a challenging time of endless gifts of food and holiday gatherings. It's time to take action now and construct the ultimate plan to manage your eating and exercise routine during the Thanksgiving to New Year stretch. The difference between maintaining your routine and gaining the typical one to two pounds is how you mentally manage your program.

- 1) The first thing to consider is getting rid of the baggage. It's important to rid yourself of unhealthy mindsets that undermine your ability to feel good and stick to your healthy eating program. This is not the time for an all-or-none approach or an obsession with the quick fix. Plan specific strategies to overcome the inevitable minor obstacles.
- 2) Strive for progress not perfection. If you stick with your healthy eating program 90 percent of the time and allow yourself a splurge 10 percent of the time, you're on the right track. One cookie or one lavish meal won't ruin your health unless you let it.
- 3) Don't deprive yourself by taking the food celibacy vow. This will only cause you to devour mounds of holiday goodies at the first celebration.
- 4) Take steps to avoid recreational eating. While some foods are more calorie-dense than others, no food will make you gain weight unless you eat too much of it. Consciously eat food you really want and make every bite count. Never eat beyond your body's physical hunger.
- 5) Plan NOT to diet after the New Year. Anticipation of food restriction sets you up for binge-type eating over the holidays.
- 6) Be physically active every day. Power shopping doesn't take the place of your regular exercise program. Break tradition and organize an activity such as ice skating at the mall for your group or family to help relieve stress and burn up calories from holiday eating.
- 7) When it's your turn to serve or bring a dish, set an example and balance lean and light party foods with rich foods, if you must have them. There are plenty of low-fat and low-calorie substitutes that are amazingly tasty. Give them a try and share your cooking creations with friends and family.
- 8) Most of all, maintain perspective and take time to relax. Perform a relaxation exercise at least once a day to rid your mind of all the clutter.

