MAINTAIN DON’T GAIN

MAINTAIN YOUR WEIGHT DURING THE HOLIDAYS

IT’S ALL ABOUT BALANCE

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

Most of us know that two keys to managing weight over the holidays are to make healthy food choices and to not overeat. But let’s face it…that can be challenging this time of year with parties, open houses, food gift giving and unending tempting treats in the office.

Take a deep breath and relax! You can still manage your weight without missing out on social occasions or depriving yourself of your favorite holiday foods. The key is balance. Here are some suggestions to guide your eating:

- **Listen to your body.** Stop eating when you are no longer hungry. Eating until you’re full or stuffed often results in consuming excess calories.
- **Keep a food journal.** Monitoring your daily intake of food and beverages will help prevent too much overindulging.
- **Balance party foods and meals with your other meals.** If you overeat at one meal, go light on the next. For your smaller meals, include lean protein for satiety (i.e. “head hunger”) and add fruits, vegetables and whole grains for fiber to keep your stomach feeling full.
- **Don’t snack on foods you don’t love.** Don’t waste calories on foods that are “just okay” or foods that you can get throughout the year. Savor your favorite holiday treats you don’t get at any other time of year.
- **Remember… smaller is better.** At social events, take only small amounts of foods that you really like and make only one trip to the buffet or snack table. Be aware of your portion sizes at every meal and snack.

- **Eat breakfast and include whole grain foods.** Eating breakfast increases calorie-burning and prevents late-day overeating. In addition, research shows that women who frequently eat whole grain cereal weigh, on average, nine pounds less.
- **Stay hydrated.** Some people theorize that we often mistake thirst for hunger. So drink up, and strive for at least six to eight cups of water every day.
- **Be aware of unconscious eating.** Holiday food is everywhere, so it’s easy to mindlessly eat while talking with someone or while you’re home alone.

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HOLIDAY PARTY POLICIES

Dinner parties and celebrations are a traditional part of the holiday season. They can also be a traditional part of overindulgence and weight gain. Try these tips, start some new holiday traditions and establish a few “party policies” to practice throughout the season:

• **Learn to say “no”** to family and friends who encourage you to eat more. You are never obligated to eat.

• **Don’t go to a party ravenously hungry.** If you go to a party starving, you’re more likely to overeat.

• **Control your alcohol intake.** Drinking alcohol lowers your inhibitions, including your control over your eating habits. Take it easy on holiday cocktails, and you’ll save calories too. Excess calories in alcohol add up quickly and tend to be stored as fat. And while we’re talking about alcohol, if you do drink, be sure to arrange for a designated driver to take you home.

• **Consume drinks with diet or club soda instead of juice or regular soda.** A 12-ounce soda is about 150 calories, but diet soda and club soda have nearly zero calories.

• **Get involved in the party planning.** Whether it’s an office or dinner party, offer to bring a healthy dish, which has been modified to lower the calories, sugar and/or fat. A fresh fruit or vegetable tray is always a great option.

• **Take the focus off food.** While the holidays may seem to center around food, it doesn’t have to be that way. Strike a balance with activities that are not focused on food.

**DID YOU KNOW**

Stress can deplete vitamin C in the body, so a little extra can help keep you healthy this time of year. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables every day for additional vitamin C, antioxidants and other nutrients.