Surviving the Holidays

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Holiday Weight Gain Facts

- Many believe the average weight gain during the holiday season is ~5 to 10 pounds.
- Research suggest that the average American gains about one pound between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day. However; many do not lose that extra pound gained during the holiday season.
- The extra 1 to 2 pounds gained each year can add up!
Why Do We Gain Weight During the Holidays?

Many Factors Contribute to Seasonal Weight Gain:

- Food-focused celebrations
- Stress
- Exhaustion
- Emotional eating
- Cold weather
- Poor time management skills
Factors that Contribute to Seasonal Weight Gain

1. Food-Focused Celebrations
   - Socializing with friends and family using food and drinks.
   - During the holidays, the availability and quantity of social fare increases—raising the temptation to overindulge.
   - Alcohol served at many social events can destroy your plan to eat in moderation.
2. Stress

- Holiday obligations and expectations add to the strain of everyday life stress
- Pressure to have the “perfect” holiday
- Added stress can lead to overeating
- Make sure exercise remains a priority in your life—exercise is a great stress reliever
Factors that Contribute to Seasonal Weight Gain

3. Exhaustion

- The demands of holiday festivities can lead people to feel sluggish and sleep-deprived.
- Leaving people more likely not to overeat and less physically active.
- Make sure to get enough sleep each night.
Factors that Contribute to Seasonal Weight Gain

4. Emotional Eating

- Some people use food to soothe sadness, anxiety, dissatisfaction, or loss.
  - turn to people for comfort rather than food
- Others use any celebration as an excuse to overindulge.
- Avoid mindless eating
  - Bring yourself back to the here and now: pay attention to what is in your hands, on your plate, and what you are eating.
Factors that Contribute to Seasonal Weight Gain

5. Cold Weather

- Some people crave high-calorie comfort food and drink when the temperature drops.
  - pie, stuffing, cream soups, etc
- Bad weather can put a damper on outside activities.
Factors that Contribute to Seasonal Weight Gain

6. Poor Time Management Skills

- The No. 1 reason people report for not exercising is lack of time.
- A game plan is needed to get in control and stay in control.
Be Realistic
- The holiday season is not a time to try to lose weight or start a diet—your goal should be to maintain your current weight.
- Don’t deprive yourself —no one wants to face Thanksgiving, Christmas, or any holiday party without being able to enjoy his or her favorite foods.
- Make a plan—this way you can splurge a little while keeping your weight within normal range.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

- Eat regular meals and snacks everyday
  - Begin your day with a substantial breakfast that includes a source of protein.
  - Curb your appetite by eating a small low-fat snack before leaving for a party—this will help keep you from overeating.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

- At parties or events, pile your plate with lower-fat foods to limit high-calorie splurges.
  - Look for the following food items:
    - whole grains, such as whole-wheat rolls, wild rice, and quinoa
    - plain or lightly dressed vegetables
    - shrimp or other steamed seafood
    - meat and poultry without gravy
    - salad greens (lightly dressed)
    - fresh fruit
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

- **Consume alcohol in moderation**
  - Alcohol offers little nutritional value and is a source of added calories.
  - Alcohol can lower inhibitions, sometimes making it difficult to make healthy food choices.

  - Alternate alcoholic beverages with calorie-free drinks, such as water or diet soda.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

- **Socialize away from the table**
  - This reduces the urge to overeat and allows one to focus on socializing with friends, family, or co-workers.
  - Move to another location that is less tempting.

- Look at food offerings before you decide what you are going to eat.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

- Try to get involved in the holiday planning process
  - Offer to bring a fruit or vegetable tray, baked tortilla chips and salsa, low-fat cheese and crackers, or any other healthy dish.
  - This will ensure that some healthy foods will be available.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

- Think outside the box
  - Research and experiment with healthy recipes.
  - Come up with creative exercise ideas.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

Smaller is better

- When choosing foods from the buffet line take small amounts of the foods that you really like.
- Before getting up for a second helping, wait 10 minutes, chances are your desire for more food is not about hunger, but about how good it taste.
- Try eating off of a smaller plate—this can help reduce the total amount of food you eat.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

Don’t Let “Food Pushers” Lead to Holiday Weight Gain

- “Food Pushers” - friends, family members, and co-workers who refuse to take “no” for an answer when they’re offering fattening treats.

- The easiest way out? Just say “no thank you”.

- You don’t have to be rude, but you do have to be firm.
Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

- Don’t forget physical activity
  - Exercise is a great way to relieve stress and boost energy levels—something we all can use during the holiday season.
Making Holiday Foods Healthier

Lighten up your favorite holiday foods and create new recipes with these tips:

1. Mash white potatoes with low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth instead of milk, butter, and salt.
2. Prepare favorite dips with fat-free sour cream or yogurt.
3. Roast vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, green beans, squash, and carrots to bring out their natural flavor.
4. Make a low-fat cheese sauce for casseroles.
5. Substitute heat-healthy canola oil for butter or margarine.

6. Prepare just one striking dessert and offer fruit, such as chocolate dipped whole strawberries, instead of cookies and candy.

7. Let your guest nibble on homemade trail mix made with whole-grain cereal, dry roast nuts, and dried fruit instead of fatty chips or other high-fat appetizers.

8. Consider lean pork tenderloin for holiday meals instead of fattier meats.
9. Use a gravy separator to skim the fat when making gravy.

10. Use part-skim or fat-free cheeses to make dishes such as cheesecake or lasagna.

11. Prepare bread pudding with fat-free egg nog instead of full-fat milk.

12. Substitute baked potatoes or sweet potatoes for candied yams.
Tips to Help You Stay Fit Through the New Year’s

- Acknowledge the fact that the holidays will probably affect your exercise program to some extent—make adjustments when needed.

- Instead of trying to squeeze in exercise into your schedule, take other things out—the goal is not to do more, but to do less, and do it well!
Your Holiday Fitness Program

- Make sure to schedule time into your day for exercise—have an entry for exercise in your Palm Pilot or planner.
- Strive to add an extra workout session or two whenever possible due to the fact that we tend to eat more this time of year.
- Be flexible when your days get busy. If you can’t make it to the gym during your normal workout time, wake up an hour early to walk or jog before work, or fit a brisk walk into your lunch hour.
Your Holiday Fitness Program

- Save time—Combine exercise and family commitments.
- Create a home workout routine for those times when you can’t make it to the gym.
  - Crunches, push-ups, lunges, workout DVD
- Plan ahead—Organize your day the evening before.
  - Prioritizing tasks beforehand will help you find time to exercise.
Final Thoughts

- Holiday time does not have to be synonymous with weight gain.
- If you fall off the wagon—\textbf{Get Back On}.
- Portion control, moderation, and planning ahead are the keys to success!
- Lastly, remember the holidays are a time to embrace and give thanks for our family and friends—spend less time focused on food and more time enjoying the camaraderie of your loved ones.
Thank You!

Happy Holidays