

Wellness Corner Connection



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Stay Healthy Through The Holidays

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Holiday Blues?

For some of us, the holidays can be a depressing time when we get the holiday blues. Feelings of sadness, loneliness, and anger can intensify when contrasted with the joy expected of the holidays. Factors that *can contribute* to holiday depression include:

- Associating the holidays with unresolved family issues or a painful childhood.
- Ignoring feelings of sadness, loneliness, or depression in an effort to maintain "holiday cheer."
- Facing the loss of a loved one with whom you have shared the holidays.
- Having unrealistic expectations of family and friends.
- Having an expectation that you "should" feel good.
- Being away from family and friends.
- Feeling isolated from others.
- Reflecting on losses or disappointments over the past year.
- Coping with changes in family obligations, particularly after a recent marriage or divorce.
- Drinking more alcohol, which is often more readily available during the holidays. (Avoid drinking alcohol to ward off negative feelings. Alcohol

Holiday shopping

- Ask people what they want instead of scouring the earth to find the "perfect" gifts.
- Shop early, when there is more of a selection.
- Stick to your gift budget.

Planning family get-togethers

- Buy prepared foods, instead of cooking everything from scratch.
- Ask others to bring their favorite dishes.
- Cook and freeze foods ahead of time.

Scheduling time with family and friends

- Simplify holiday commitments and traditions. Discuss with your family which traditions are most important to you and to them. It's okay to re-evaluate past traditions.
- Allow time for yourself. Remember to do things that *you* enjoy.
- Avoid time crunches by making plans to visit some friends and family soon after the holidays.
- Don't over-schedule yourself. Allow enough time to relax and recover after visiting with others.
- Tell family members about your commitments so you are not struggling against their expectations.
- Travel after rush hour. When driving long distances, give yourself time to stop and rest.

Managing your time

- Set priorities and let go of impossible goals.
- Stop to enjoy the fruits of your labor.
- Don't spend all of your time planning activities for your family. You might end up feeling drained and unappreciated.
- Take the time you need to finish tasks that are important to you. Don't try to complete everything at once.
- Ask others, including the kids, to help you complete chores.
- Rest when your body tells you to.

Pausing before the holiday spread

- Avoid overeating and overdrinking, especially alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid starving yourself in anticipation of eating at holiday parties. This approach can lead to eating too much of the wrong foods.
- Continue to exercise and watch your diet.

Learn Healthy Coping Methods

- Try something new. Take a vacation with a family member or friend.
- Spend time with people who care about you.
- Volunteer your time to help others. Spending time with those in need can help you feel less isolated.
- If you are religious, take time to reflect on the spiritual significance of the holidays.
- Try to appreciate the good things you have now instead of focusing on the past.
- Stay active. Get out. Go for a walk. Window shop.
- Accept feelings of sadness or loneliness. These feelings might not go away just because it's the holidays.
- Get help if you need it. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help any time of the year.

How To Prevent Holiday Stress

Are your expectations for the holidays realistic? Asking yourself this question is the first step to managing holiday stress. Make a list of what you expect from yourself and your family during the holidays. Hidden within these expectations you might find your potential holiday stressors — the things specific to you that can cause stress. Make changes that will be most helpful to you. Do not hold on to unrealistic goals, such as creating the most enchanting holiday atmosphere. Remember to include your own needs.

FREE CRISIS HOTLINE NUMBERS

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
1800-662-HELP (4357)

Samaritans 24-Hour Crisis Hotline (212)
673-3000

24/7/365 Crisis Hotline
Call: 1 (800) 273-8255
Text: "ANSWER" to 839863

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Helpline: 1-800-950-6264 or in a crisis text NAMI to 741741



Maintain Don't Gain This Holiday



Easier said than done right? With all the extra calories lurking around every corner – frosted cookies at the office, eggnog at your neighbor's, jelly doughnuts for Hanukkah or chocolates in your stocking. All these extras add up, and if you're like most Americans, you'll put on a pound or two by New Year's Day.



So what's the harm in a little holiday weight gain, especially if it's just a pound? According to researchers at the National Institutes of Health, most Americans never lose the weight they gain during the winter holidays. The pounds add up year after year, making holiday weight gain an important factor in adult obesity.

But you don't have to fall into this trap. It is possible to enjoy holiday goodies without putting on a single pound. "*Portion control is the key*," says Susan Finn, PhD, RD. Finn serves as chairwoman of the American Council for Fitness and Nutrition. Of course, it's not easy to go on portion patrol when the temptations are endless.

The following tips can help you avoid overindulging but still enjoying all your holiday favorites!

1. Never Arrive Hungry

Planning ahead can help you maintain discipline in the face of temptation. Don't go to a party when you're starving. Try to have a nutritious snack beforehand. If you do arrive hungry, drink some water to fill up before filling your plate.

2. Divert Your Attention

Many people forget that there's more to a holiday party than food. Don't look at the party as just a time to eat. Enjoy the company of friends, play games or dance to the music. Focus on something other than food like good conversation!

3. Pace Yourself

Don't eat the first things in sight. Walk around (if it's a buffet) and see what your options are. If there is something you "just have to have", put it on your plate in a small amount and fill the rest with healthier choices. And eat slowly, maybe even putting your fork down between every bite. This puts you in control.

4. Count Your Bites and Nibbles

When there are appetizers and lots of finger foods, it's easy to lose count of how many you eat. Keep track by stashing a toothpick in your pocket for each one. Set a limit and *stick* to it.

5. Outsmart the Buffet

When dinner is served buffet-style, use the smallest plate available and don't stack your food; limit your helpings to a single story. Go for the simplest foods on the buffet. Fresh fruits and vegetables and shrimp cocktail are good choices. Watch out for sauces and dips. Also refer back to #3 above.

6. Limit Alcohol

Avoid drinking too much alcohol at holiday parties. It's not just about calories but about control. If you drink a lot you won't have as much control over what you eat. If you feel out of place without a drink, try sipping water or club soda. This way you have something to carry like everyone else.

7. Be Choosy About Sweets

When it comes to dessert, be very selective. Limit your indulgences to small portions and only what is an absolute MUST to try. If possible, try to go with more of the homemade treats instead of the highly processed. What about sampling several desserts, if you only take a tiny bite of each one? Some people can eat one bite of something and stop. However my guess is that most people can do that. If you know you're the type who can't stop at one bite, you're better off taking a small portion of a single dessert than piling your plate with several treats you plan to "try."

8. Bring Your Own Treats

Whether you're going to a friend's party or an office potluck, consider bringing a low-calorie treat that you know you'll enjoy. Bringing your own dessert will make the more fattening alternatives less tempting. And don't feel your dessert has to be typical holiday fare. Don't limit your thinking about what holiday food has to be. People do love fruit. Cut up in a very festive bowl...irresistible!

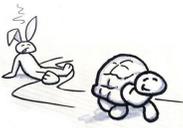
9. Limit 'Tastes' While Cooking

If you do a lot of cooking during the holidays, crack down on all those "tastes." People lose their appetites when they've been cooking because they've been eating the whole time. Instead of tasting mindlessly every few minutes, limit yourself to two small bites of each item pre- and post-seasoning. Just put the spoon in and taste a little bit. It's not grounds for a big scoop. Think BLT (bites, licks and tastes)...they add up quickly!

10. Walk It Off

Make a new holiday tradition: the family walk. Besides burning some extra calories, this will get everyone away from the food for awhile.

Get people off the couch and move. Go out for a walk as a family before or after the meal or both! Walking not only benefits you physically but also puts you in a mindset to be more careful about what you eat. There's something about activity that puts you in control.



Maintain Don't Gain This Holiday (cont.)

In Summary: Here are a few things to keep in mind as you celebrate the holidays...

1. Do not skip meals in order to “save room” for your holiday dinner. Your metabolism will slow down; you will be ravenous and will eat way more than you should and probably of the wrong stuff too.
2. Eat what you want but control your portions. Try to fill your plate with more fruits and veggies to start. Survey the entire buffet line before filling up your plate.
3. Don't stand or sit around the food table while you chat. You may mindlessly pick at the food even though you are not hungry.
4. Downsize your plate. Put your fork down between each bite. Chew slowly and taste your food.
5. Don't forget to keep exercise as part of your routine! It's a great stress reliever and will help burn off some of those extra calories!



Holiday Beverages

The holidays are a time of year when alcohol, soda and other sweetened beverages seem to be unlimited. And just because they are liquid and go down very easily, these beverages can contribute a significant amount of sugar and empty calories to your diet, which can cause weight gain. Additionally, alcohol consumption is often linked to **increased appetite** and is a risk factor for weight gain. If you're trying to control your weight, it is best to limit liquid calories during the holidays — and all year long, for that matter.

American Heart Association recommendation:

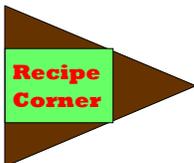
One to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. (A drink is one 12 oz. beer, 4 oz. of wine, 1.5 oz. of 80-proof spirits, or 1 oz. of 100-proof spirits.)



Sugar Sweetened Beverages

Sugar-sweetened beverages are any liquids that are sweetened with various forms of added sugars like brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, and sucrose. Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) or sugary drinks are leading sources of added sugars in the American diet. Frequently drinking sugar sweetened beverages is associated with weight gain/obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, kidney diseases, non-alcoholic liver disease, tooth decay and cavities, and gout, a type of arthritis. Limiting the amount of SSB intake can help individuals maintain a healthy weight and have a healthy diet.





Healthier Dessert Ideas

Maple Date Bars



Moist and chewy, these date-filled bars make a satisfying afternoon snack or a nice treat to bring into the office. They travel well, since you can let them cool in the baking pan and carry them. Or, for a prettier package, place them in a cookie tin divided by sheets of parchment paper.

Brownie Energy Bites



These two-bite treats taste rich and indulgent, with absolutely no added sugar. Each also contains 3g fiber and 3g protein. You might find one to be satisfying, but don't feel bad about eating two—that's only 222 calories. Store chilled in an airtight container for up to 1 week.



SUGAR ALTERNATIVES

	HONEY	MAPLE SYRUP	AGAVE NECTAR	STEVIA
1 CUP SUGAR (8 oz/240g)	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1 tsp.
1 TBSP. SUGAR	3/4 tsp.	3/4 tsp.	3/4 tsp.	1/8 tsp.
1 TSP. SUGAR	3/4 tsp.	3/4 tsp.	3/4 tsp.	just a pinch
NOTES	Decrease liquid by 2-4 tbsp.	Decrease liquid by 3 tbsp.	Decrease liquid by 1/4 cup.	To replace bulk, add applesauce, apple butter, or yogurt

Walnut-Yogurt Dip (Akhrot Ka Raita)

This sweet-savory dip is delicious with pita wedges and fresh strawberries or cut-up pineapple for breakfast, dessert, or a snack. You can prepare it up to a day ahead and refrigerate.



Find these recipes and more on www.cookinglight.com

Cherry Almond Chocolate Clusters

Full of texture and only three ingredients, these morsels make fantastic holiday finger food. You don't even need to bake them!

Find this recipe on www.foodnetwork.com

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Wishing everyone a healthy and safe holiday season!!!

