

## Holiday Overeating

The holidays are a time of celebration, and the foods served during this time can remind us of happy memories and lost loved ones. As a dietitian, I believe in good food and enjoying your holiday experiences. It can be a difficult time if you are on a diet or trying to follow a healthy diet. Coupled with holiday stress and high-calorie foods, it can be difficult to avoid unwanted holiday weight.

All is not lost.

Here are 7 things you can do to enjoy your holiday treats in a healthier way:

### 1. Don't skip meals.

Skipping meals may seem like a good way to reduce the amount of calories you consume, but is likely to make you eat more food faster when you finally do eat. Make sure to keep your regular meal schedule so your body can trust you to provide.

### 2. Fill your plate with colors.

Aim to cover half of your plate with colorful, festive fruits and vegetables. This will increase the nutritional value of your meal, help you feel full quickly and decrease the number of calories you consume.

### 3. Eat slowly, and savor your food.

Don't be too quick to scarf down your food. Learn to savor every bite. Try using every few minutes to focus on a different aspect of your meal. Using all the senses will help you not only enjoy your food more thoroughly, but also extend the time it takes to eat.

### 4. Appreciate special treats.

Many celebrations occur only once a year and are accompanied with foods that are not available other times of the year. Pick one or two foods that are special for you and take your time to savor those foods. Having a special treat once a year will not make or break your weight, so enjoy a few but skip the rest.

### 5. Choose drinks wisely.

Many holiday drinks are high in calories or sugar, and it's easy to have multiple drinks without thinking. Stick with low- or no-calorie drinks like water, tea or sparkling water, and reserve your calories for the foods you enjoy instead.

### 6. Listen to your body's fullness signals.

Pay close attention to how you feel while eating. Eating until we are full does not mean eating until we are sick. Choose to slow down and stop eating when you feel you are getting full. This may even mean waiting a few minutes to see how you feel before finishing your plate or getting second helpings.

### 7. Pick a holiday food mantra.

When you are tempted to keep eating simply because the holiday foods are special and taste so good, use these mantras to help:

I can make this food again anytime I want.

The leftovers will be delicious.

I choose to enjoy this meal, and I look forward to the same treats next year.



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