



**Joslin Clinic**

# Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

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It is holiday time again, and the days between Thanksgiving and New Year's can be filled with temptation. From office parties to family celebrations, the holidays are times of sharing food and entertaining. You don't have to sacrifice taste or traditions to stay on track this holiday season. Here are some tips to help enjoy the season without weight gain or bouncing blood glucose control.

## **BE REALISTIC**

- Instead of trying to lose weight during the holidays, set a goal of weight maintenance. This is more realistic, freeing you from the "all or nothing" thinking that sabotages healthy eating.

## **PLAN AHEAD**

- Try not to arrive to a party hungry. Eat a light but filling snack (such as yogurt or a piece of fruit) before getting there.
- Do not skip meals, keep carbohydrates consistent throughout the day, try to stick to your usual meal plan.

## **AVOID OVEREATING**

- Try to stay at least an arm's length away from the food table before and after eating to prevent nibbling.
- Before heading through the buffet line, circle around the food table so you can choose the food you want to eat.
- Position yourself at the end of the line; you will be less likely to go back for seconds.
- Choose smaller portions of your favorite foods, and eat slowly, savoring every bite.
- If you want to go for seconds, wait a few minutes first so you can really feel your body's response to fullness.

## **ALCOHOL**

- Limit alcohol since it is high in calories and can stimulate your appetite. If you want to drink alcohol set a limit of one to two drinks per occasion. Always consume alcohol with food, and avoid sweet wines and liqueurs.
- Try having club soda/ calorie-free sparkling water, or water with a lime or lemon or with a splash of juice.

## **FOOD CHOICES**

- Choose vegetables, fruit, or grain-based foods. Bring a vegetable tray with a low fat dip and you will be guaranteed to have a low calorie, low fat snack.
- Limit fried food. Choose steamed, grilled, baked, or broiled items instead.
- When eating crackers or pretzels pay attention to portion size. It is easy to lose track when you are socializing.
- Trim off all visible fat from meat and avoid eating the skin of the turkey.
- You don't have to pass up your favorite dessert, but remember to indulge in moderation. Have just a taste, or share dessert with someone.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

- Include physical activity as part of your holiday plans; if you do overindulge make sure you go for a walk.
- Take a walk between dinner and dessert.
- Play with children.
- Admire holiday decorations by foot, after the meal.

## **COOKING**

- Reduce the fat in your favorite holiday recipes and offer to bring one to a holiday party. Your food will have less calories and fat, yet have the same great taste and texture:
- Use the lower fat versions of sour cream, cream cheese, yogurt, or evaporated milk.
- Substitute whole milk with skim milk.
- Skim the fat off of gravy and broth to make lower fat sauces and soups.

## **LEFTOVERS**

- Remember, food safety should be part of any celebration involving food. A good rule of thumb; Keep Hot Food Hot and Cold Food Cold. Food left at room temperature for over two hours should be discarded. This includes the turkey.
- Freeze leftovers in portion size containers so you can enjoy favorite items after the holidays are over.
- Graciously decline bringing leftovers home.

***Bottom line: Enjoy yourself!***

- **Choose three tips to try during the holiday season.**

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- b. \_\_\_\_\_
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