

Happy Holiday Health

“Planning, not willpower, is the key to weight control” –Thomas Wadden

The long holiday season- from Thanksgiving to New Year’s- is upon us again. Even though it is a festive time of the year, many people dread this time of the year; it brings more socializing, more entertaining, and more temptation to over-indulge. It is easy to consume 3000-6000 calories during just one meal throughout the holiday season. This year, take action! Be proactive in taking charge of your health and avoid weight gain.

Holiday Weight-Gain Risk Assessment

Please mark yes or no beside each question

- YES NO 1. When attending a dinner party, do you often feel obligated to accept second helpings to please the host?
- YES NO 2. Are mad dashes between shopping malls and social events the only exercise you get during the holidays?
- YES NO 3. On Thanksgiving morning, do you skip breakfast to save your appetite for the turkey feast later in the day?
- YES NO 4. Do you bake a batch of Christmas cookies to “have around the house” for visitors, but usually end up eating the whole batch yourself?
- YES NO 5. Are you the type of person who lets yourself go during the holidays- splurging on anything you want in the promise of going on a diet in January?
- YES NO 6. Do you sometimes feel powerless to resist your favorite holiday foods like eggnog and pumpkin pie?
- YES NO 7. Are you an all-or-nothing kind of person (i.e., the type of person who feels he or she has to eat the whole pie or none at all)?
- YES NO 8. Do you feel an obligation to polish off every bit of fattening food you receive as a gift?
- YES NO 9. Do you find yourself “sampling” a lot while baking holiday goodies (i.e., eating raw dough and licking the frosting off the spatula)?
- YES NO 10. Do you plan to go on a diet in January- after the damage is done?

Scoring: Give yourself one point for each question you answered “yes.”

0 to 1: Great job! Keep up the good work. Enjoying seasonal food in moderation and being active are essential to staying fit during the holidays.

2 to 4: Pretty good! You’re enjoying the holidays without overdoing it.

5 to 7: Okay, but there is room for improvement. Choose one of the above areas to focus on, such as increasing your exercise level.

8 to 10: Yikes! Be careful. If you keep on like this, you may have a huge obstacle to face in January in the area of weight loss.

Take a positive first step by improving on one of the areas mentioned above.

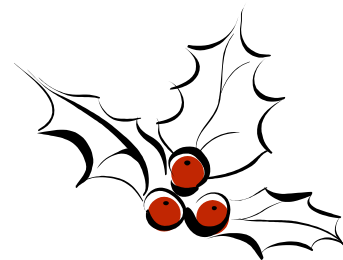
Tips for Avoiding Holiday Weight Gain

Parties

- Eat something before you go to the party- curb your appetite a little
- Keep mingling and moving- avoid hanging out near the goodie table
- Only make one trip to the buffet table
- Keep portions small- often, a taste is all you will need to satisfy the craving or your curiosity
- Eat slowly- it takes 20 minutes for your brain to register that you are full
- Drink lots of liquids, but go easy on the alcohol

Dinner Parties

- If you’re bringing a dish, make a healthy favorite
- Fill half of your plate with vegetables
- Choose the white meat of poultry, without the skin
- If there is choice in rolls, opt for whole wheat
- Take small portions





Tips for Cooking a Healthy Holiday Meal

- Start the meal with a squash, sweet potato or broth soup
- Dressing: Use plain unbuttered bread crumbs, or choose brown or wild rice, or a mix
 - Bake in a bowl – reduces calories by 80%
- Mash potatoes with evaporated skim milk or chicken broth rather than butter and cream
- Gravy - skim fat from juice just before thickening
- Serve a steamed vegetable
- Offer a large spinach, mushroom, red pepper, and red onion salad drizzled with olive oil and lemon
- Bake or mash sweet potatoes instead of making candied yams
- Offer whole-wheat rolls rather than buttery white rolls and croissants. Serve with fruit preserves or pumpkin or squash butter
- Pumpkin or fruit pies have 50% fewer calories than pecan pies. To lower the fat even more:
 - Use egg beaters or egg whites in pumpkin pie filling
 - Make pie crust with graham crackers and liquid butter buds
 - Substitute evaporated skim milk for whole milk
 - Sample pies, instead of having a large piece
 - Go easy on whipped cream or use a non-fat whipped topping

Baked Rice with Butternut Squash

- 1 butternut squash
- 2 C. fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- 1 C. water
- 1 T. chopped fresh or 1 t. dried rubbed sage
- 1 t. olive oil
- 1 C. diced onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 C. uncooked Arborio or other short-grained rice
- ¼ C. dry white wine
- 1 t. chopped fresh or ¼ t. dried thyme
- ½ t. salt
- ¼ t. black pepper
- Cooking spray
- ¼ C. grated fresh Parmesan cheese
- Fresh thyme sprigs (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Place squash on a baking sheet. Bake for 30 minutes or until tender; cool. Peel squash; cut in half lengthwise. Discard seeds and membranes; cut into ½ inch cubes. Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees.

Bring broth, water, and sage to a simmer in a medium saucepan (do not boil). Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion; sauté 6 minutes. Add garlic; sauté 2 minutes. Add rice; sauté 1 minute. Stir in squash, broth mixture, wine, chopped thyme, salt, and pepper; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Place rice mixture in a 13 x 9 inch baking pan coated with cooking spray. Bake for 30 minutes. Stir mixture gently. Sprinkle with cheese; bake an additional 5 minutes or until cheese melts. Garnish with fresh thyme sprigs, if desired.