

Healthful Holiday Tips

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that Americans gain an average of 0.4 to 1.8 pounds each year during the holidays. Sadly, this weight isn't likely to disperse with the holiday cheer. Here are a few strategies for keeping the holidays healthful and fun, without the weight gain...

At Home:

Get active around the house. While it may be impossible to carve out a daily 60-90 minute sweat session during the hustle and bustle of holiday planning, seize those 5-10 minute breaks — they can really add up during the course of the day. Go for a walk, lift some hand weights, or hop on your home exercise equipment.

Cleaning the house burns a surprising number of calories. So pat yourself on the back the next time you're getting ready for guests — you're getting some exercise too.

At Holiday Parties:

When you host a holiday party, the table doesn't have to be groaning under the weight of calorie-dense treats like cookies and cakes. Instead, make fruits and vegetables the stars of holiday buffets. Make festive fruit and vegetable platters, interspersed with nonfat yogurt dips, or set out fruit-based desserts like chocolate dipped strawberries.

When you attend a holiday party, fill up on one or two foods that are healthful— veggies, fresh fruits, lean protein etc. That way you can add small portions of your favorite holiday treats without feeling deprived.

Whether you're hosting or visiting, if a party has music, get out on the dance floor! You'll have fun and burn calories at the same time.

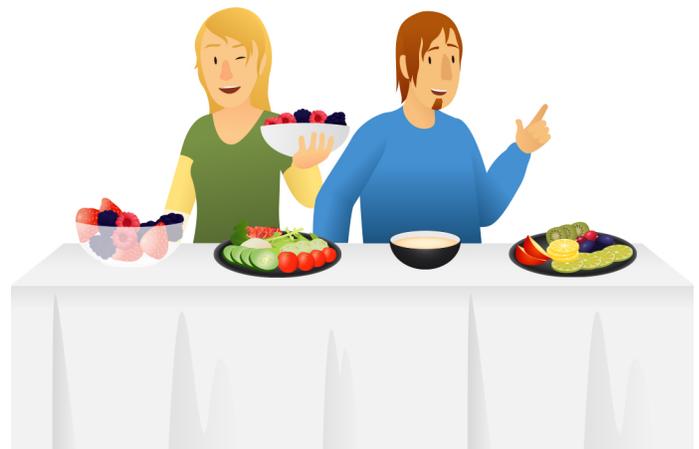
On The Go:

It's harder to say no to oversized portions of empty-calorie snack foods when you're starving because you've been running errands all day. Don't let yourself get caught in that scenario — be proactive and set up some snacks that you can take on the go when you have a big day ahead of you.

For example, grab fruits that can travel "as is," like apples, oranges, bananas, or clementines. They're perfect for eating on the go. Or make a few quick wraps and store them in the fridge. Layer hummus, sliced veggies, lettuce, and low-fat cheese in a whole grain wrap for an easy, portable meal.

Try these tips to maintain a healthful lifestyle during the holidays!

By Judy Doherty, PC II



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