

# Nutrition Notes from the Neuromuscular Center

## Healthy Holiday Eating

### December 2012



Traditional holiday meals can be comforting, satisfying and healthy!

With the holidays fast approaching, and many parties and family functions to attend, it can be hard to know what to eat. Trying to navigate what you should and should not eat and how much to eat can make it hard to enjoy yourself. Below are some ideas and suggestions on how to party and have a good time without feeling guilty.

### Easy Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

The holidays are a time for friends, family and food. Gaining weight during this time can be a great concern. Below are some helpful tips to help keep you from overeating.

- Use a smaller plate; this will encourage proper portion sizes and make you feel like you have more food on your plate.
- Fill your plate first with vegetables, fruits and salad before diving into the entrees and desserts.
- Eat slowly and enjoy all of the great flavors.
- Do not go back immediately for a second serving; wait at least 10 minutes before you go back.
- Drink a glass of water before you eat. This will help you fill up faster without adding calories.

### Portions are right in the palm of your hand:

- 1 cup= 2 rounded palms
- ½ c= 1 rounded palm
- 1 oz= 1 handful
- 3 oz= palm of hand
- 1 tbsp= size of thumb
- 1 tsp.= tip of thumb
- 1 oz of cheese= size of thumb

# Party Plan 101

Overeating during the holidays can be a problem. Below are some tips to help you not overeat. Following these simple plans may help with the dreaded holiday weight gain.

## **Don't Go Hungry**

If you arrive at the party starving, you will overeat. Try to have a lite snack of fruit, veggies or low fat cheese. This will help take the edge off your appetite and keep you from over-eating the high calorie/fat foods at the party.

## **One Trip Only**

Make just one trip to the food table. Pick out your favorites and keep your portions sizes small. Normally, just a little taste can satisfy a food craving. Remember this probably will not be your only party for the season.

## **Talk Instead**

Don't hang out by the food table. Mingle with the other guests and talk. This will help you to not eat as much. Your thoughts will be on the person you talking with, instead of food.

## **Make Your Choices Count**

Opt for fresh veggies and fruits and low fat cheese. Try to fill up on these items and you will leave less room for the higher calorie/fat items. You can have smaller portions of those items to satisfy that craving. You can even bring a healthier dish to the party. This way you know there is a healthy option for you that you really enjoy.

## **Sitting Down?**

If you are having a sit down meal, you can still eat healthy. Only take half portions of the foods being eaten. This will let you have seconds for the same amount of calories as a normal portion. As you are waiting for those foods to be passed, this will help your brain let you know if you are already full.



## **Exercise**

Just because it is the holiday season, it does not mean you should not exercise. Keeping physical activity a part of your normal routine will keep you from gaining those extra pounds.

## **Be Realistic**

The holidays are not the time to start a diet. This can cause you to fail at your goal and put you behind because you get discouraged. Instead make your goal to maintain your weight. Eat fewer calories before you go out to a party so you can eat more of the party food. But remember, you still need to eat sensibly at the party.

## **Have Fun!**

Most people equate holidays with food and special family recipes. It is very easy to overindulge on food items you might only get once a year. Eating only a serving of them will make them special for years to come. Remember, it is the holidays and a time to be with family and friends. Just eat healthy as you have fun!

## Holiday Tips

As the holidays approach, we must stay committed to eating healthy.

Here are some helpful tips on making recipes healthy and still keeping them tasty:

- Using two egg whites in place of one egg can reduce the cholesterol and produce the same tasty result.
- Use low-sodium, fat-free chicken broth in your mashed potatoes to add flavor and lighten holiday fat content.
- Substitute applesauce for oil in recipes.
- For dips, sauces, and pie toppings use non-fat yogurt, sour cream and whipped topping.
- Choose reduced-fat or non-fat cheeses for salads and casseroles.

The holidays are a great time for celebrating with friends and family. Food becomes a big part of the celebrations for most people. But with just a little preparation, you can keep off the extra holiday pounds and still enjoy all that the season has to offer.

- Portions- practice portion control. Try eating slower or using smaller plates. Fill up  $\frac{1}{2}$  your plate with fruits and vegetables. Try not having second portions until you wait at least 10 minutes. Have a conversation with someone first to make sure you are still hungry.
- Desserts- the holidays are filled with numerous sweet things to eat. Most people pull out their special recipes at this time of year. Remember to eat in moderation. You can freeze some of the goods and have them at a later time. This way you can enjoy the holiday longer.
- Parties- you may be invited to multiple parties during the season. Bring a healthy dish to the party so you know there is something healthy and good tasting to eat.

- If you plan on treating yourself later, start your day with a small meal that includes whole grains, fruit, dairy foods and protein like eggs, ham, or peanut butter.
- Don't starve yourself beforehand. Rather, eat a small, lower-calorie meal or snack such as fruit or a bagel so you aren't tempted to overdo your calorie intake for the day.
- Select carefully between foods you definitely will eat, those you will sample, and those you will skip.
- Don't rush to eat. Socialize and settle into the festivities before you eat.
- Move your socializing away from the buffet or appetizer trays. This will minimize the unconscious nibbling.



# Food Safety

## Holiday Home Food Safety

Is it a tradition for your family to serve buffet or potluck-style dinners at the holidays? If so, remember to practice these home safety tips to reduce you and your family's risk of food poisoning:

Promptly refrigerate any of the leftovers within two hours. Keep hot foods above 140 degrees Fahrenheit and cold foods below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Discourage "double dipping" by providing large spoons to serve dips and dishes and plenty of plates and bowls. Make sure all fruits and vegetables are washed before serving, and all meats are cooked to their proper temperatures.

For more tips on holiday safety information, check out [www.HomeFoodSafety.org](http://www.HomeFoodSafety.org).

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## Food Safety Tips for Holiday Road Trips

Hitting the road for the holidays? As you fill up the gas tank and check the air in the tires, don't forget to pack some snacks and light meals for your holiday travel. You will be glad you did, even for short trips, if heavy traffic or weather conditions slow you down. Keep your backseat treats safe by following these easy tips:

### Choose Carefully

Pack easy-to-transport, shelf-stable foods like cereal, trail mix, popcorn, single-serve containers of applesauce, cans of tuna, peanut butter sandwiches, fresh fruit, carrots and celery.

### Clean Up

Wash hands with soap and water during food preparation, especially between tasks. If you can't get to a restroom to wash your hands, pack moist towelettes or a hand sanitizer to clean up before eating.

### Know Your Foods' Limits

Do not let food sit unrefrigerated for more than two hours. Pack food with plenty of ice or a frozen ice pack in an insulated lunch bag or cooler. Use a refrigerator thermometer to make sure the temperature stays below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

### Apply the Same Rules to Fast Food

If you stop for carry-out or fast-food on the road, take the same food safety precautions. Wash your hands before eating and don't eat food that sits out for more than two hours.

### Pack Leftovers with Care

If you bring home leftovers on the return trip, keep them chilled with ice or ice packs in an insulated cooler. If it's cold outside, consider transporting food in the trunk rather than the heated car. Remember to reheat leftovers to 165 degrees Fahrenheit before you serve them for a second round.

