

How to Avoid Weight Gain During the Holidays

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The holidays are a time for gathering with friends and family surrounded by food, desserts, and drinks. The average weight gain during these times is one to three pounds. However, researchers found that the bulk of this weight gain occurs in the 10 days following Christmas.

Although gaining a pound might seem like a small price to pay for your favorite holiday treats, the researchers point out that what makes this poundage so problematic is the fact that you're unlikely to lose the extra weight at the end of the holiday season. This means, within a few years, all that holiday weight gain will accumulate.

Here are a few tips to avoid gaining weight during the holiday season.

1. **Stay Active.** Many times, during the holiday season, we tend to gather around the TV, sitting around and talking. Take the initiative to plan a walk, hike or play a game of football, hopscotch, kickball, etc.
2. **Eat your protein.** Holidays meals are typically high in carbohydrates and low in protein. Think of all the creamy cheesy dips, casseroles, desserts, and alcohol. All carbohydrates in these foods lead to weight gain. Balancing your meals with proteins, will keep you fuller for a longer period, reducing your hunger and calorie intake.
3. **Bring a Healthy Dish to Share.** You can control what you consume at holiday parties and family get togethers. Bring a dish that is part of your weight loss plan.
4. **Snack Wisely.** There are many unhealthy snacks such as crackers, cookies, pies, cakes, and dips that are easily available. When we have easy access, we tend to snack more. Try to keep the snacks out of sight and especially out of your home. If the snacks are in a break room at work, avoid that room. If you are hungry and need a snack, choose healthy snacks such as proteins, vegetables, or fruits.
5. **Mindful Eating.** Pay attention to what we are eating. Eliminate distractions such as TV, work, and electronics. Try to chew slowly and put your fork down between bites. This will allow the body to recognize the fullness signals and eat less calories.
6. **Watch Portion Sizes.** During to holiday we tend to overload our plate because we want to try everything. One way to watch portion sizes is to use smaller plates and avoid second servings.
7. **Sleep.** Sleep deprivation increases the hunger hormones and decrease energy levels. Lack of sleep can lead to more hunger, consuming more calories and less exercise. We recommend at least 7 hours of sleep per night.

8. **Limit Liquid calories.** Drinks such as alcohol, sodas, and other calorie containing drinks have a significant amount of sugar that can cause weight gain. Alcohol will also increase our appetite leading to more calorie consumption and more weight gain. Alternatives to consider are zero calorie flavored seltzer water, teas, or diet sodas.
9. **Limit Desserts.** During the holidays, there are sweet treats everywhere. It can be very tempting to try a little taste of everything. When we do this, we end up consuming more sugar. Instead of eating every dessert in sight, pick your favorite and indulge in moderate amounts taking the time to eat it. This will leave you more satisfied and feeling less guilty.
10. **Get right back on your Plan.** Ever tell yourself “I’ll start my diet tomorrow” or “I’ll start my diet after the New Years?” If so, this is very common during the holidays. Thinking like this can prolong unhealthy habits. Instead of delaying your weight loss plan for later, start right now. Get right back on your eating plan today and stop making excuses. It is the best way to move on and make healthier choices.

While staying on plan to avoid weight gain can feel difficult and often impossible during the holidays, it is possible. Remember to stay active and limit holiday treats. You might even surprise yourself and lose weight before the beginning of the new year!

If you need help with weight loss, give me a call at 623-776-0110 or visit our website at www.scottsdaleweightloss.com