

DISCOVERING *Your Best Self*

YOUR WEEKLY COMMUNICATION

Strategies to Fight Holiday Weight Gain

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The average American gains several pounds in the six weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. This seemingly inevitable weight gain is avoidable; you can fend off added pounds during the holidays without becoming a dietary Scrooge.

"It's almost impossible for most of us not to overeat and indulge during the holidays. But by making simple changes in your diet, you can enjoy many special holiday foods without gaining extra pounds," says Lawrence T.P. Stifler, Ph.D., president of Health Management Resources Corp. in Boston.

Eat healthier foods low in fat and calories. "You don't have to feel like you're on a diet. You can still fill your plate at a holiday buffet, but load it with fresh fruits and vegetables instead of fried chicken fingers or cheese sticks," Dr. Stifler says.

You should also exercise regularly. Get 30 minutes of moderate exercise most, if not all, days of the week. "A sedentary lifestyle is one of the major contributors to holiday weight gain," he says.

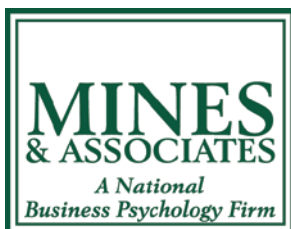
MAKE SIMPLE CHANGES

Many traditional holiday foods are loaded with fat and calories. To keep your weight manageable, substitute a lower-fat food. Or go ahead and eat a certain food you enjoy too much to give up, but have a smaller portion and conserve calories by skipping something that's not as important to you.

Dr. Stifler offers the following advice for cutting fat from your holiday diet:

- Eat white-meat turkey, which has fewer calories and fat than dark meat. A 3-ounce serving of skinless turkey breast has 119 calories and 1 gram of fat. The same amount of dark meat has 142 calories and 5 grams of fat.
- Put gravy through a skimmer before serving, and you'll cut the calories by 80 percent. That's a substantial change: Holiday gravy that's not skimmed contains 60 to 70 calories per tablespoon (a generous helping can add as many as 500 calories to your holiday dinner).
- Serve stuffing baked outside the turkey; it has half the calories of stuffing cooked inside the bird.
- Serve at least one item very low in calories and fat, such as a fresh fruit salad or steamed vegetables topped with lemon juice and herbs. A one-half cup serving of steamed green beans has only 15 calories and a trace of fat; a one-half cup serving of sautéed green beans has 50 calories and 6.6 grams of fat.

- Serve baked potatoes instead of candied sweet potatoes. A plain baked potato has 220 calories and just a trace of fat; one cup of candied sweet potatoes has 300 calories and 6 grams of fat.
- Don't top vegetables with butter; instead, use nonfat yogurt or low-calorie sour cream. You'll save an average of 100 calories and 10 grams of fat per tablespoon.
- Serve apple pie topped with vanilla frozen yogurt instead of pecan pie topped with whipped cream. Per slice, you'll save 460 calories and 32 grams of fat.
- Substitute mustard for mayonnaise on your lunch-hour turkey sandwich. You'll save 82 calories and 8 grams of fat.
- Pay attention to what you drink. Two mixed drinks can contain as much as 500 calories, one cup of eggnog, 380 calories. But two glasses of cider or white wine have only 300 calories.



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