

## Stuff the Turkey, Not Your Belly

It's easy to "pig out" during the holidays. Dinner dates, family breakfasts, holiday lunches, brunches and traditional family dinners provide ample opportunities for eating, eating and more eating. A study by the National Institute of Health (NIH) shows that most Americans gain two pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) offers a few tips to help overcome the urge to overeat.

- Stay Away From the Buffet- Standing by the buffet table is nothing more than an invitation to overeat. Holiday parties are a time to celebrate with family and friends, not just to celebrate food.
- Drink Water- Drinking a large glass of water 15-20 minutes before having a huge holiday dinner will help you eat less. The water will also keep you hydrated and help burn fat more efficiently.
- Eat Slowly- Chewing food 30-40 times per mouthful allows the "I'm full" response from the brain to tell your mouth that you're satisfied. It takes about 20 minutes for the brain to let you know you are full.
- Eat- Don't skip meals before the 'Big Meal.' Skipping a meal keeps your metabolism low and will keep you eating until you eat too much. Sleepiness normally sets in and sleeping on a full stomach is a sure way to gain weight.
- Avoid fast food- The holiday season can keep you on the go with minimal time to prepare meals. Fast food may be accessible, but often is high in fat. Prepare and freeze quick, healthy meals ahead of time to stay out of the fast-food trap.
- Dieting is difficult during the holiday season. Rather than thinking about losing weight, consider the goal of maintaining your weight. By making a few healthy eating adjustments, it can be possible to enjoy holiday foods while maintaining your weight. Look for healthy substitutes for ingredients when you whip up your favorite holiday dish.
- Choose fresh fruit as a festive and sweet substitute for candy.
- Substitute low-fat and low-calorie ingredients, or reduce the amount of high fat/calorie substances. You may be able to use low-fat or skim milk products instead of whole milk in some dishes.
- Make good food choices. Fill up on low-calorie and low-fat items. Instead of fruitcake, try dried fruit. Instead of ham, choose turkey. Instead of stuffing, eat cornbread or dinner rolls as healthier alternatives.
- What you drink during the holidays can quickly add calories. Alcoholic beverages and many fruit punches can be long on empty calories and sugar. Consider sparkling apple cider or water as healthier choices.