

York University Staff Association Health and Wellness News and Views

It happens every year around this time. The air gets nippier, the days get shorter and your jeans get a little tighter... Ready or not, feasting season is here. That seemingly endless time of temptation that starts with Thanksgiving stuffing and pies, continues through to Halloween candy, onto Christmas treats, and finally comes the New Year's toasts. Oh and then we have Valentine's Day chocolates to contend with.

We have four months of constant feasting. If we do feast throughout the season as many people do, without control, then we set ourselves up for bad patterns, ill health and weight gain. ☹️ Hopefully some of these tips can help us all to get through the holiday season without those seemingly inevitable extra pounds.

First thing first, do not try to lose weight over the holiday season: It is impossible. Trying to lose weight during this time can only add stress and set you up for failure. Don't try any pre-holiday crash diets so you can make it all up during the holidays either. Chances are you will wake up in January weighing even more than you do before the crash diet.

Holiday Survival Hints

The holidays are a time of celebration with family, friends and co-workers. Focus more on relationships and less on food, keeping it secondary to the good time you are enjoying. The holiday mentality encouraged by the media advertisements is that you should be feasting at every gathering. Wrong. That only leads to overeating, weight gain, and New Year's resolutions that just never seem to be kept.

Be conscious of what you eat and how much. Treat yourself, but in moderation. When you arrive at a holiday event, especially a buffet, take a good look around without a plate in hand. Choose the main things that you want to try. You don't have to try

them all. Once you have decided, get a plate and stick to your decision!



All of those festive drinks contain calories too. Besides restricting your alcohol to one or two servings, you also need to restrict the type of alcohol. For example, instead of high – fat eggnog have a light beer or wine. After that stick with calorie free drinks such as water, unsweetened juices, coffee or tea.

Manage Stress and Emotion

One great way to deal with holiday emotions and stress is to make sure exercise remains a priority in your life. Exercise is always a great stress reliever. Another way to keep stress to a minimum is to “Learn to say no” in a courteous manner of course. If you really do not want a second helping or another cookie politely decline. People will hopefully respect your decisions and may even emulate them. At social events, try not to fill silence with food. Many people will choose eat and drink because they are feeling nervous or are unsure of what to say in certain situations. Instead make an effort to try to get to know people, beyond superficial small talk. You never know what friendships, romances, and business relationships you may create.

Finally try to maintain a healthy lifestyle both inside and outside of the fall/winter feasting seasons. Constant weight gains and losses can be harmful to your health and your psyche. Remember to keep in mind that the holidays are really about spending time with loved ones, not food.

Here's to better Health!

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