

Prevent that holiday weight gain

Thanksgiving starts the fast-paced holiday season filled with celebrations. It is also the season when many people gain weight. There is good news: research shows the average weight gain is only about a pound. The bad news is that this extra pound doesn't magically disappear with the dropping of New Year's crystal ball, but stays with us, year after year.

An important step in managing your weight is to stop gaining. You can stay at your current weight throughout the holiday season! Read on to see how to enjoy the season while taking care of yourself and your weight.

Enjoy the parties. Most holiday gatherings present choices and decisions of what to eat. If you look forward to eating a favorite cookie or dish at a family gathering or traditional party, then go ahead and enjoy it! Just avoid other treats that are not your favorites. The key is to **plan ahead**, even before you go.

- ✓ Before a party, eat a small salad, fruit, half a turkey sandwich or a bowl of broth-based soup.
- ✓ Make thoughtful choices about what to eat. Decide how much you're going to eat before, not during the meal.

- ✓ Fill up on water or other calorie-free beverages.
- ✓ Alcohol calories add up fast. Drink moderately.
- ✓ Always put food on a plate; that makes it easier to keep track of what and how much you eat.
- ✓ Use a small plate or bowl and a tall thin glass.
- ✓ Sample little bits of different things instead of taking large portions. Don't take seconds.
- ✓ Enjoy the fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Try to sit when eating.
- ✓ Try to be the last person to start eating.
- ✓ Try to pace yourself with the slowest eater.
- ✓ Get in the habit of leaving some food on your plate uneaten. People are less likely to offer you more food if it looks like you are still eating.

Be active. Think of active things to do with family and friends. Walk, hike, play basketball or touch football or soccer, dance, bike, take a fitness class or put on an exercise DVD or cable show, or walk farther and faster while you shop!

Cook healthier versions of holiday foods. See Step Ahead's Healthy Holidays packet for healthy ways to make a turkey dinner and use up leftovers.

Recipe of the Week – Last-Minute Leftover Salad

Serves 2

Adapted from American Institute for Cancer Research

- 1 cup cooked turkey (or chicken or canned tuna)
- 2 cups chopped mixed vegetables (onion, celery, carrots, bell pepper, tomatoes, raw or cooked broccoli, or green beans, etc.)
- 1 ½ cups leftover cooked brown rice (or any grain)
- ½ cup canned beans (any type), rinsed and drained
- 2-4 Tbsp. reduced-fat vinaigrette salad dressing
- 2 Tbsp. plain non-fat yogurt or non-fat sour cream
- 1 Tbsp. reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1/2 tsp. dried parsley (or 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh)
- 1/2 tsp. dried chervil or cilantro (or 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh)
- Salt and black pepper (optional)

1. In a medium bowl, lightly mix turkey, vegetables, rice and beans till well combined.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together vinaigrette dressing, yogurt, mayonnaise, parsley and chervil or cilantro.
3. Gently mix the dressing and salad ingredients until well coated.
4. Salt and pepper to taste.
5. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour or overnight to allow flavors to blend.

Nutrition Information:

Calories: 86	Total fat: 6 g. (1 g. saturated fat)
Carbohydrate: 55 g	Protein: 28 g
Dietary fiber: 8 g	Sodium: 688 mg

Tip of the Week

Planning your holiday meals and celebrations? Schedule them at normal meal times. Celebrations outside of normal meal times encourage people to pile on extra calories.

NIH News in Health, November 2007. http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2007/November/docs/01features_01.htm