

Weighing In



The Weigh Station's Monthly Newsletter



THIS MONTH'S
STORIES

We've Gathered Together, Hoping we Don't Gain Weight

Avoiding the Holiday Hangover



“We've Gathered Together, Hoping We Don't Gain”

For many people around the country, November 22nd through the 24th is the beginning of the eating season for the holidays. Thanksgiving only marks the start of the eating frenzy and holiday celebrations and draft traveling between brother's sister's aunts and uncles. For individuals who struggle with eating disorders, carbohydrate intolerance and insulin resistance, the holidays can prove to be a tough time.

Sometimes just a simple commitment such as attending a home for a visit to reunite with family and friends becomes a source of tremendous anxiety and emotional strain. As patients ponder “what can I eat”.

Food consumption is an integral part of all of the holiday celebrations, it's an integral part of most the things we do as Americans. When meeting friends and family, we will say "we gotta go out to dinner sometime." Isn't it interesting we never invite people over to paint the house, mow the grass, or build a barn? It always has to center around food.

According to the National Eating Disorders Association, the diet industry earns upwards of \$50 billion per year, capitalizing on Americans preoccupation with food, drink and weight gain. *Nearly 13 million Americans struggle with binge eating disorders while 10 million suffer from anorexia or bulimia.* Of course, there is no shortage of other dietary contrived illnesses.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are especially tricky when it comes to food. Being mindful of times of stress and emotional trauma is important especially when your loud and abusive uncle can cause you to want to eat more. We also have many newsletters on our website on "How to get through the holidays without gaining weight." Many of our patients may not be able to spend time with family over Christmas or Thanksgiving, and so they slip into that holiday depression looking for food to make them feel better. One patient said Thanksgiving night he went to an AA meeting even though he didn't drink, so that he could be around other people with problems.

The best way to get through the holidays when you struggle with eating problems is to look for people who support you honestly. That's why we use the buddy system here at the Weigh Station along with social media, to help encourage and support you through those tough moments. **(Check out our facebook link at the end of the newsletter)**

It's very common for individuals with eating problems to isolate themselves in many regards from holidays; for example, they will avoid Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year's parties because of their addictive nature. Which in turn gives them destructive behaviors which cause them to gain weight and drift back to their old ways.

Recent research suggests that such isolation occurs from deeply rooted fear of being negatively evaluated by their families. Comments like "I thought you were going to a weight loss clinic" are phrases that most patients don't want to hear. They know they're being evaluated just by what they put on their plate.

Therefore, in attempt to avoid potential situations involving such evaluations, many patients choose to isolate themselves from others entirely as a common defense mechanism.

Healthy eating is not just what you eat but how you eat. So often we eat mindlessly, stuffing our mouths with food while watching television or working at the computer or even driving. The pleasures of eating lies in slowing down and entirely experiencing the meal itself.

If you take time to enjoy your food, it will also help you digest better, you'll cut down on the amount of the food that you ingest, and that will do away with your acid reflux and indigestion problems.

Another trick is to give thanks. Pause before each meal and thank God for his blessings. Show thanks for the blessings and abundance in your life. Be glad that you can slow down and take a break.

I find it interesting that on the last night before Christ was crucified he had the last supper. After they finished eating, he broke bread with them and wine which we now know as communion. There's a lot to be learned about communion. But what's even more interesting is it still centers on food. When you get a chance, you might want to look into the deep meanings in the communion table.

So, as you finish your meals with your family and friends remember not to overindulge, pay attention to what you're putting on your plate and follow what you have experienced these past years.

You can finish the holiday season with your weight down and being satisfied.

Have a very blessed and happy Christmas! - Chuck Shaffer MD



Avoiding the Holiday Hangover

It's that time of year again, the holiday season has arrived! Colder weather and seasonal snacks often make keeping extra weight from creeping on challenging. The good news is, it can be done! Check out these tips on how to enjoy a huge holiday celebration without feeling miserable in your clothes when the holidays are all said and done.

MAKE SURE TO MOVE:

Around this time every year we often hear that it's too cold to get outside and walk. Even if it's cold out, there are plenty of exercises that can be done indoors with little to no equipment. Exercising in the morning can help ensure better food choices all day long according to a study published in the journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*.

In this study brain scans were conducted to study exercise timing. Researchers found that when women worked out in the morning., they not only moved more the rest of the day, but also responded less to images of tempting food compared to the days they didn't do exercise in the morning. This translated to fewer calories and food cravings!

Make it a goal to do 10 minutes of bodyweight exercises such as air squats (3 sets of 10-15), push-ups on your knees (3 sets of 5-10) and plank holds (work your way up to one minute holds). Knock these out first thing before things get busy, after all- it's just ten minutes!

WILLPOWER:

Avoiding holiday treats may be as simple as mind over matter! Like a muscle, to have strong willpower you must work at it. The more you work it, the stronger your skills will become and the easier it will be to say no to that sweet treat staring you in the face! The key is to practice keeping yourself in check in non-food situations, too. This could mean keeping your cool in rush hour traffic or dealing with a two year old tantrum without having one of your own. All of these challenges require self-control. If you can refrain from losing your temper when someone cuts you off on the road, you'll be better able to resist the cookies at the party you're on your way to.

PLAN PLAN PLAN:

Like a good boy (or girl) scout, it's important to be prepared. If you're eating at your inlaws, plan to bring a healthy dish along. That way you can enjoy a dish that you know won't derail you. If they insist on cooking, ask them if they would be up for a new recipe...there is always a way to interject politely.

SET HEALTHY TRADITIONS:

Set a new family tradition, instead of the focus being on food, shift the focus to a fun family event. For example, instead of looking forward to the feast on Christmas you can focus on a 5K or a family game of cards or charades. Gather around the living room and participate in a white elephant exchange. Even taking a little "you" time is important. Plan on curling up by the fire while reading a good book, soak in the tub, or just take a nap! When the food is finally ready, enjoy the holiday smells, savor your favorite flavors and be present in the moment making memories with those you love the most!

Wishing You a Very Merry Christmas!

-Tricia Foley, MS, RD, CLT

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