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Do You Have Tips For Careful Holiday Eating?

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ask A Specialist

A weekly question/answer column

Do You Have Tips For Careful Holiday Eating?

Georgia Lauritzen answers:*

If your New Year's resolution last year was "Lose the excess weight I gained at Christmas," consider these strategies to help with careful, healthy eating this year.

- Think ahead. Make a list of your holiday meals and parties and mark them on the calendar. On the day of a party, start with a light breakfast and lunch and try to avoid eating between meals. Also avoid going to parties with a ravenous appetite. Eat a piece of fruit, drink a small amount of juice or eat a couple of crackers just before leaving home.
- Be cautious of foods that are high in fat. Hors d'oeuvres often fit into this category, as well as nuts and desserts. Do your socializing away from food and beverage tables so you won't be tempted to overeat. If high calorie or high fat foods are served, try a half portion. Also be aware of what you drink. Diet soda, mineral water and seltzer water are zero calorie beverages, while alcoholic drinks can contribute substantially to your calorie total. If you are the host of a party, be sure to provide low fat choices including fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat spreads and dips.
- Keep track of what you eat. Try to match days you overeat with days you undereat. Recruit a friend, family member or spouse to help monitor your eating, then reward yourself with non-food items for your success.
- Don't forget to exercise. With all the holiday meals and parties, it is more important than ever to schedule regular exercise time. Suggest a walk with family or friends to look at holiday decorations, or plan functions that include physical activity such as movement games or dancing. Also plan activities such as skating, snow skiing, or snow shoeing. Be careful, however, not to exercise immediately after eating a heavy meal.

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