

# Holiday meals don't have to mean extra pounds

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the winter holidays isn't lost during the rest of the year."

The knowledge that people actually accumulate a large proportion of their yearly weight gain over the winter holidays, researchers added, may prove useful in treating obesity.

Holiday weight gain can be avoided.

Avoid overeating by plan-

ning your meal program before the holiday feast with a food diary. Set reasonable goals. Do not plan to avoid the dessert table, however you should plan to eat more fruit and vegetables. If you eat more than planned, do not feel guilty. It is more important to accurately record the additional items in your food diary. This will provide you with the information necessary to make adjustments in

your food consumption over the next few days to offset those excesses, according to mealinformation.com.

Pioneerthinking.com, a health web site, offers a few tips to avoid holiday fat.

1. Exercise a few hours before eating a big meal. It will boost your metabolism and your determination.

2. Avoid alcohol or restrict your consumption by having a glass of water between

drinks.

3. Build an extra workout day into each week's exercise regime.

4. When snacking, choose the lowest calorie options. Snack on raw veggies, but watch out for creamy dips.

5. Eat slowly and chew food thoroughly. You'll feel satisfied sooner.

6. After big eating events, take a few days to go on a nutritious, low-calorie diet.

Substituting a high-quality protein drink such as Almaxed for one or two meals a day will ensure you get the protein and amino acids needed to keep your metabolism running smoothly and burning fat efficiently.

7. While watching television, keep your hands busy by knitting, filing your nails, or playing solitaire. This avoids the need to munch.

8. When feeding the kids,

serve only what you think they will eat. You can always offer seconds. A plate of leftovers can tempt you to finish what they did not.

9. If a co-worker brings cookies to your next meeting, take one and set it aside to savor when you return to your desk. It is too easy to lose track of how much you eat when your mind is on the agenda.

## AIDS take home test

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ners.

"There's a possibility that it's going to change within the next few years because what's the number one minority group in the United States?" Stewart asked, referring to the growing Hispanic population.

"On a whole results would be given and treated a lot quicker, however I think the biggest problem would be people testing secretly and not sharing results and going untreated," Patricia DuPont, a licensed psychotherapist says. "We tend to avoid therapy in general and there's a cultural stigma against it so we as Blacks would likely not seek out the courses of treatment, both medically and psychologically."

When Marcel Watkins was diagnosed with HIV a year ago, he needed all the support he could find.

"I was in denial even though I had a doctor staring me in the face like 'You are HIV positive,'" the investment banker in San Diego says. It was through visits with his doctor and the pressure put on him to begin taking medicine that Watkins faced reality. "If I found that out at home and alone, I think I'd have gone on like nothing happened."

## Cancer survivors inspire screenings

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to women who can't afford them. Money generated from the sale of the calendar will be used to provide more free mammograms. The 2006 calendar is the third put out by Sister, Speak!

Breast cancer, which will affect one in eight American women in their lifetimes, has been particularly unkind to black women. While they are less likely to develop the disease than their white counterparts, black women die more often from the disease, partly because they do not get yearly mammograms and other screenings that could detect the cancer early.

"People are more aware that they need to have their mammogram, but there is still that silent fear," said Meadows. Sister, Speak! tries to ease that fear. The organization sponsors several health fairs each year and often is on hand at churches and community events to drive home to women the importance of screenings.

Meadows hopes that the calendar will aid the organization in its mission. It shows, she says, that a diagnosis is

not an automatic death sentence. The women featured have their good days and bad ones, but they are making it, Meadows said.

Patricia Hough was inspired by the 2003 calendar. Her husband bought it for her as a Christmas gift soon after she was diagnosed. Hough, 43, said she felt an immediate connection with the women in the calendar. Since being diagnosed, Hough has had many people offer her kind words and support. But only women who have walked the path can have true insight into her plight, she said.

"It did not mean as much unless it was coming from someone like me," she said. Hough now is an active member of the Sister, Speak! sisterhood and one of the survivors featured on the current calendar.

Hough is now in remission. The wife and mother works full time. Her side job these days is educating other women about the importance of screenings and living life to its fullest. Hough believes that the more she does to reach out to other women, the more she heals and rejuvenates.

## Dispelling everyday myths about epilepsy

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one of a number of things that can make a difference in the way the brain works.

"It's hard to say...any human can have the capability to have seizure disorders," said Dr. Carter. "But studies have shown that minorities are more apt to suffer from epilepsy. Those groups are more likely to have strokes and head injuries just by virtue of their occupation."

Blue collar and manual labor jobs that have been disproportionately filled by people of color, are the type of jobs that place the employee at greater hazard of a head injury and they are at greater risk of seizures.

Other myths are epilepsy has mythological and spiritual causes rather than physical.

"Epilepsy is a condition of the brain and it's not contagious but there are a lot of untruths that surround the disorder," said Melson of Greater North Texas Epilepsy Foundation.

One such untruth is when someone is having a seizure you need to stick a spoon in a person's mouth. According to the Edleman Foundation, it is impossible for a person to swallow their tongue during a seizure.

Sufferers are encouraged by professionals to try and live as normal a life as possible. To Cynthia Tisby that was easier said than done.

"I couldn't be in a room by myself," she said. "Everyday I had to go to the doctor to get shots, everyday for about three years. When I was nine, I stopped having them (seizures)."

Subject to the taunts and involuntary exclusion caused by her condition, Tisby coped as much as possible.

"I really didn't play with other kids, sometimes my own sister wouldn't play with me," Tisby recalls. "I really couldn't go far from the house. I had to be watched 24/7. A lot of stuff I don't remember. I would just be playing and then I would have a seizure. I would black out...to go through episodes

like that. I had to be under continual doctor care. But you never knew when they will strike."

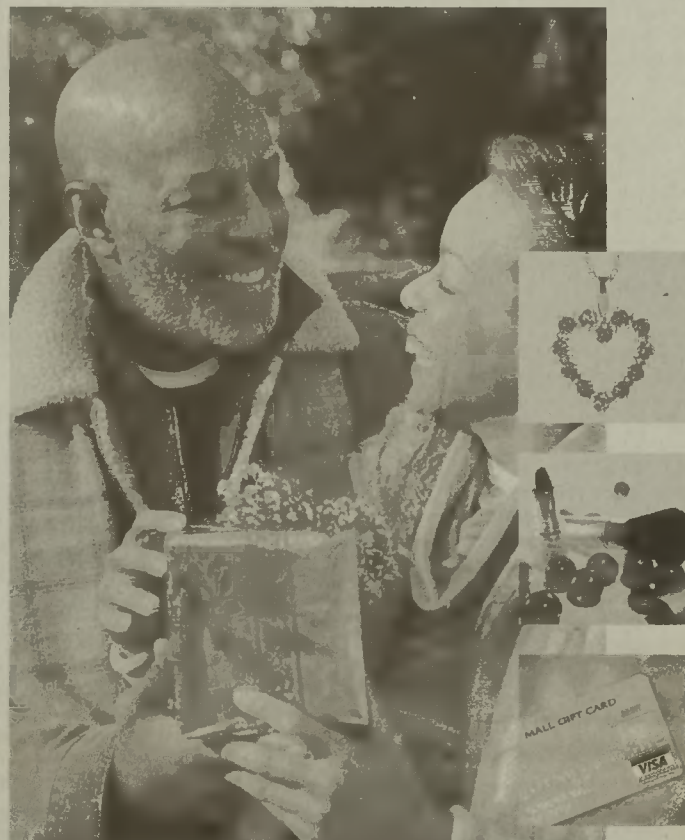
Tisby has been seizure-free for about 21 years now and is grateful everyday for her improved health.

"Recently I watched a

Lifetime movie, about a young boy who suffered from epilepsy and I nearly burst into tears. I wouldn't wish epilepsy on anybody," she said.

Because of old wives tales and rumors about the disorder, people continue to misunderstand the nature of the

growing disorder among people of color. But organizations like the National Epilepsy Foundation, American Epilepsy Society and the Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy are fighting stigmas and looking for a cure to this disorder.



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