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This holiday season doesn't have to be filled with over-indulgence

HEALTH & FITNESS

Holidays don't have to be the binging season

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'Tis the season of gluttony—it starts in October with the temptation of “bite size” Halloween candy, builds momentum with a double helping of Thanksgiving mash potatoes, and finally ends with a buffet of tasty appetizers and a champagne toast promising to end the excess.

It seems Americans celebrate everything they can conjure up, and sometimes just being Friday will do, until they waddle belly-first into the New Year with a trail of crumbs behind them. By January, many Americans consider chocolate and alcohol a new food group and their largest pair of elastic waistband sweat pants as “dress clothes”. When did the holidays become all about food?

Surprisingly, the average American gains a pound or less from Thanksgiving to Christmas, which doesn't sound that bad. The big problem is that very few people lose the weight after the holidays. If you contin-

ue stacking up these holiday season splurges, the pounds start adding up and a healthy body weight quickly becomes the Ghost of Christmas Past. To maintain weight and good health during the holidays, it is best to start the season off with a plan, and that is the best thing you can do—simply, have a plan.

Plan your day. If you know you are going to have a big dinner or party, watch the calories on other meals — but don't skip because this can lead to gorging yourself. In the morning, try eating a high-fiber breakfast cereal or oatmeal with skim milk, add a piece of fruit and juice, and you are off to a great start. For lunch consider a turkey sandwich piled high with veggies and add sides of pretzels, fruit, and a bottle of water. During the day snack on low calorie foods, such as vegetables, rice cakes, and fruit.

While you are at the party, fill up on lower calorie items first, like a vegetable and fruit based selections. Then when you are less hungry, have smaller portions of your favorites like cheeses,

chocolates, and desserts.

Watch for hidden calories in alcohol, appetizers, and desserts. For example, a regular beer has approximately 150 calories and a glass of red wine has nearly 100 calories. Classic appetizers like nachos, blooming onions, and fried potatoes can pack as many or more calories than a meal, and desserts like cheesecake have over 400 calories per slice.

Moderation is the holiday mantra. While moderation may not be the holiday mantra with your pocketbook, it should be with your serving sizes. An appropriate portion of meat is approximately the size of a deck of cards, a serving of pasta is equal to one ice cream scoop, and a serving of cheese should be the size of four dice.

Be mindful of your physical activity and increase or maintain your physical activity during the holidays — it also helps with dealing with stress. Try to accumulate nearly 60 minutes of physical activity most everyday. Take a brisk walk, or make your activity functional by parking in a remote spot at

the mall, walking to the grocery store, or using your bike for transportation. Playing football or other sports with the family counts too—take the party outside after the big meal for some fresh air and fun.

Don't restrict yourself, one overindulgence won't break you. The average American consumes about 25 percent more calories than normal on Christmas and Thanksgiving. While that is a lot of excess calories, it is only two days out of the year. It is what you do everyday between Thanksgiving and Christmas that makes a difference. Don't let one celebration give you license to continue indulging the rest of the week—continual excess will have you dragging and zap your energy when you need it most.

Along with your holiday vacation plans, create a strategy for a healthy holiday season. Focus on family, fun, moderation, and good health and make the 10-week long “all you can eat” seasonal buffet just as passé as I hope gas guzzling cars and those awful gauchos will be.

Kilpatrick, from page 7

lar to Mayor Kilpatrick's stud, echoed Griffin's sentiment.

“It is imperative that we thoroughly understand a person and their nature and culture before we try to judge them. I got my earring

because it was the trend and wouldn't take mine out if in his position,” Caldwell said.

He added: “You can't take someone's physical appearance and judge someone. If you must judge someone, judge them by the content of their character, not by their physical appearance.”

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