

9 WAYS TO AVOID GAINING WEIGHT

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day

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The holidays and fattening food go hand-in-hand. Thanksgiving and the leftovers can last a week. Then it's only a few more weeks until Christmas. New Year's is the following week. ***Studies show that 75% of a person's annual weight gain happens between Thanksgiving and the end of the year.*** Make this the year that you avoid holiday weight gain.

Most people associate the holidays with food, fun, and gaining weight. However, you can choose to enjoy the holidays and still eat responsibly.

Avoid gaining weight this holiday season:

- 1. Have a healthy meal before arriving at a party or other event that includes food.** Feel free to go crazy on Thanksgiving. ***A single day won't ruin your waistline.*** For other holiday events, fill yourself up with healthy food first. Your stomach will be full of healthy food, and you'll be less likely to eat junk food.
- 2. Bring a healthy side that you love.** Many gatherings encourage the bringing of a dish to share. Ensure that your offering is both healthy and delicious. You can limit your consumption of unhealthy food and enjoy the gathering at the same time.
- 3. Focus on things other than food.** When attending a party, spend your time and attention on the other attendees. Mingle and socialize. Find a healthy snack and a bottle of water.
- 4. Maintain your normal diet and exercise routine.** An occasional lapse won't do

any damage, but ***it's surprisingly easy to gain 10 pounds or more within 6 weeks if you aren't careful.*** Keep going to the gym and stick with your regular diet as much as possible. Avoid deviating from your routine.

- If you're considering the possibility of beginning an exercise program for the New Year, why wait? There's no time like the present to make your health a priority.

5. Add a daily walk to your routine. Get the entire family together for a daily walk. You'll burn a few calories, keep your blood sugar under control, and reduce your appetite. Keep the pace enjoyable and you'll look forward to your daily walk.

6. Eat slowly. The slower you eat, the less you will have eaten when your body finally decides it's full. ***The easiest way to overeat is to eat quickly.*** Chew your food slowly and completely. Talk between bites. Drink plenty of water with your meals. This will also fill your stomach.

7. Wait at least 30 minutes before having seconds. Your first meal was enough to make you full, but your brain just hasn't registered the information yet. Thirty minutes is plenty of time for your brain to inform you that you're full. Have a nice chat with your friends or family before re-filling your plate.

8. Take part in a fitness or weight-loss competition. There are plenty of opportunities during the holiday season to lower your weight or increase your fitness. Even if you don't win, you're bound to be in a better place than if you'd never competed. Your workplace might have something to offer.

9. Start with salad. Whether you're eating at home or attending a party, have a big salad before commencing with the rest of the meal. Remember to take it easy on the salad dressing.

Plan ahead this year. ***It's easier to avoid gaining weight than it is to lose weight.*** Enjoy

your friends and family during the holiday season. Excessive eating isn't a prerequisite to having a good time. Focus on making healthy choices and moderation. Have a healthy meal before indulging yourself. You can avoid holiday weight gain by making smart decisions.