

Family Living Focus

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Lighten Up Your Holidays

Special foods are a part of many holiday traditions. But, they can also present a challenge to maintaining a healthful diet. New research from the National Institutes of Health shows many overweight Americans can expect to gain an average of 4-5 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

Researchers determined two main factors influenced participants weight gain: level of hun-

ger and level of activity. This time period is often filled with many hectic errands, parties, shopping, and other activities that often decrease time for exercise and balanced meals.

While starting a weight loss plan may not be a realistic goal during the holidays, maintaining weight or avoiding further gain certainly can be. The following is a list of suggestions to help keep your holidays light and bright:.

- Learn the Three and One Shuffle. Tune up your body to burn more calories. For every one minute spent at the table, walk three.

- Eat holiday colors. Red — cherry tomatoes, red peppers, radishes, apples, strawberries. Green — broccoli, spinach, kale, kiwi, cabbage, and green pepper. Fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins and minerals, and the majority have no fat.

- Party goes, plan ahead. If you can bring something to the party, plan a low-calorie treat with fruits and vegetables. This way, you can be assured of at least one healthful selection. The fiber in them will help fill you up, not out.

- Take the punch out of your drinks. Alcohol is like a kissing cousin to fat; it contains 7 calories per gram, and fat has 9 calories per gram. Try mixing sparkling water with fruit juice for bubbles without the bite.

- Shake the salt habit. Taste your food before you season with salt. Try lemon, lime, or sampling the wide variety of herbs with different foods. Or, give yourself a month vacation from salt to really

taste the natural flavors of foods. (It takes your taste buds this long to adjust). As a result, you may reduce your blood pressure in the process.

- Potassium, calcium, and magnesium may also decrease high blood pressure. Many fruits, vegetables, and dairy products are excellent sources of potassium, magnesium is found highest in green vegetables and grains, and calcium in dairy products.

- Attention all shoppers! Eating out can be a challenge — be alert for menu descriptions that signal high fat traps: crispy, golden brown, fried, sauted, creamy, cheesy, and jumbo supreme.

Lights include: broth-based, grilled, stir-fry, and baked.

- Relax! Holidays often bring more hassles and stress. Many people use foods to comfort them and reduce anxiety.

If this includes you, keep apples, carrots, and whole grain crackers on hand for crunch without the high calories.

- Eat without the guilt. Give yourself permission to eat one or two of your favorites. Balance out your plate with realistic portions and concentrate on socializing, not the food.

What Are Phytochemicals?

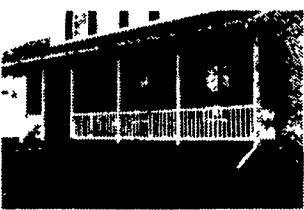
Phytochemicals are chemicals found in plants. They don't usually have nutritional value, but they do contain protective, disease-preventing compounds. Scientists have identified more than 900 phytochemicals already, and more are discovered each day. There are more than 100 different phytochemicals in just one serving of vegetables!

The National Cancer Institute has been working with scientists on discovering more phytochemicals and why they're good for us. These chemicals are vital for the health of the plants and now, thanks to this research, we're finding that they can help protect humans against certain diseases. In fact, phytochemicals are helpful in the prevention and treatment of at least four of the leading causes of death in the United States—cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. They are also involved in many processes including ones that help prevent cell damage, keep cancer cells from spreading and those that decrease cholesterol levels.

As you can tell, phytochemicals are healthy for us and they're found in healthy foods.

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