

HOLIDAY EATING THAT'S MORE GRAVE THAN GRAVY

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Many of us are in the midst of non-stop gatherings with family and friends for the holiday season that likely center around special meals with festive food and drinks. What would your onsite Injury Prevention Specialist have to say around the challenges you face with your meal choices and healthy eating habits? Keeping to your usual exercise routine?

By eating 200 extra calories a day between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, you could potentially gain 2-3 extra pounds over a 5-6 week period. In spite of the joy of the holidays, cardiac events are **more likely** during this season due to poor focus on health. Let's talk about what can we do to stay healthy AND enjoy the holidays.

MAKE A COLORFUL PLATE



If you notice your plate is dominated by white and yellow colored foods, you're not getting the nutrients your body really needs in your holiday meals. Make your plate more colorful by adding some fruits and vegetables. Bringing a pre-made veggie tray to your event or chopping up some apples and bananas for a fruit salad is an easy way to contribute to holiday health.

SCAN WHAT'S ON THE TABLE

Before you start putting food onto your plate, check out what's down the line to see what you want instead of piling on every dish that's offered. If you're planning the party, put the healthy foods up first in line. That way your guests are more inclined to load up on the healthy stuff!

WATCH WHAT YOU DRINK

Calories from drinks can add up quickly. Look for zero sugar / calorie drinks, water, and tea. Popular alcohol drinks such as beer, wine, and other mixed drinks range from 150 to 225 calories a serving. If you drink alcohol, have a glass of water in between drinks. Also avoid alcohol on an empty stomach since it can increase your appetite and diminish your ability to control what you eat.


EAT SLOWLY, ENJOY CONVERSATION

When you are focusing on the foods, you tend to overeat and stuff yourself. Instead, eat slowly and focus on people and enjoy the conversation. Remember, your brain needs some time to realize you are full. It is a good idea to take a 10-minute break after your first plate and enjoy conversation, then recheck your appetite. You might realize you are full or only have a small space to fit some dessert.



FIND WAYS TO EXERCISE

Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity each day to help you feel healthier during the holiday season. How can we fit it in between all the gatherings, shopping, and event planning? Taking a family walk before or after a meal is a great way to fit in exercise and connect with your friends and family.

Holiday eating doesn't have to be all rules. Enjoy yourself during the season, but be aware of what your body tells you, eat something green, and have a merry time! 

About Toshi Hirano, MS, ATC, CES || Toshi graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with his bachelor's degree and from the University of Northern Iowa with his master's degree. He has been a Certified Athletic Trainer since 2009, working mostly in the collegiate setting and some clinical settings before starting his tenure with Work Right in 2023. He enjoys cooking and spending time with his wife, daughter, and dog.



Work Right NW is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.