

Health Tip: Eat Like an Athlete on Super Bowl Sunday

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(PhysOrg.com) -- So your New Year's resolution is to lose weight in 2009 and already you're faced with your first challenge: Super Bowl Sunday.

The traditional fare of overstuffed heroes, chicken wings, chili, and of course, chips and dips, is enough to weaken the will of any new dieter.

"People get very excited watching football and they don't see what they're shoveling in their mouths," says Elisabetta Politi, nutrition director at the Duke Diet and Fitness Center. "They eat out of excitement, stress, happiness, sadness, all the emotions that go along with watching the big game. "You can consume thousands of calories and hundreds of fat grams without thinking about what you're doing."

That's a problem, when you consider that walking to the fridge for another beer doesn't burn off any extra calories. Nor does screaming at the television.

The secret to Super Bowl party success -- rather than excess -- lies in the players themselves. "If you eat the way athletes do -- diets that balance foods low in fats, lean proteins and some carbohydrates -- you're more likely to make it through the party unscathed," Politi says.

It's pretty simple to accomplish. Here's how:

- Punt the sour cream-based dips. load up on the crudités and opt for a

dipping blend of red kidney beans, chopped tomato, parsley, vinegar, chili powder and cumin. Make a fruit salsa, or, serve protein-rich hummus. Many store-bought varieties are available and flavored with garlic, red pepper, or scallions. Offer pita chips or baked potato chips instead of fried snacks.

- **Lean on the hero.** The Italian hero, loaded with fattening, processed meats and cheeses, has no place on this year's buffet table. Instead, order a deli platter filled with ham, turkey, roast beef, grilled chicken and low-fat cheeses. Pile on lettuce, tomatoes, pickles and roasted red peppers. Serve mustard and ketchup instead of mayonnaise. Wrap them up with low-calorie tortillas, or try whole wheat bread or whole wheat crackers.
- **Pass the pizza.** Say no to the saturated fat found on the neighborhood pizza supreme, and yes to your own version, says Politi. Buy frozen pizza dough from the supermarket and top it with crushed fresh tomatoes, garlic and a sprinkle of low-fat cheeses. Then add a colorful array of fresh vegetables like peppers and onions, mushrooms, sun-dried tomatoes and olives.
- **Spike the shrimp.** Sure you can do a traditional low-fat shrimp cocktail, but you could also kick it up a notch by boiling raw, unshelled shrimp in a can of cheap beer spiked with one tablespoon of pickling sauce. Chill and serve with salsa or cocktail sauce. "Making your guests peel the shrimp slows down their food consumption," Politi says.
- **Sideline the brownies.** Replace cakes with trays of fresh fruit, dates, figs and banana chips.
- **Football anyone?** Nothing beats the benefits of exercise. Whether it's during the tailgating party or the halftime show, get your guests out of the house and into the spirit of the game by throwing a football around. "That'll put you in the right mood and burn up some calories so you and

your guests can eat more than usual," she says.

Provided by Duke University

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