

Healthy eating tips for holiday parties

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Expert says you can maintain your resolve at the buffet table.

(HealthDay)—It's all too easy to overindulge in food and drink at holiday parties, but there are things you can do to make sure you don't stray too far off the path of good health, an expert says.

"In a party atmosphere, we often throw the rule book out the window and treat ourselves more than usual," Lori Rosenthal, a dietitian at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, said in a center news release. "Even the most disciplined can let their guard down, filling up on food and drink and doing things that we later wish we hadn't."

She offered some tips for holiday party-goers.

Eating a [healthy snack](#) before you leave home will help limit how much high-calorie holiday food you eat at a party. Drinking water or other nonalcoholic beverages beforehand can also reduce your desire to eat

and drink a lot at a party, Rosenthal said.

Check out the [food options](#) at a party before you dig in, and choose wisely. Use a smaller plate in order to keep your [portion sizes](#) down. Standing away from the food table will reduce your snacking.

Having a glass of water between each [alcoholic drink](#) will help limit the alcohol's effect. Sip cocktails slowly. Keep track of how many drinks you have, or ask a friend to help you monitor your [alcohol intake](#), Rosenthal suggested.

Drinking water the morning after a party can help a headache and also counteracts the high salt levels in party foods. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as fish or walnuts, have anti-inflammatory properties, and potassium-rich [fruits and vegetables](#), such as bananas, kiwis and mangos, help replenish electrolytes.

If you decide to have a drink with electrolytes, choose a sugar-free one in order to avoid excess calories.

"Holiday festivities are all about having fun, but we also should make good decisions about our health," Rosenthal said. "Everyone should include taking good care of their health as a 2013 New Year's resolution. Following these tips should help get you on the right track."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers [holiday health and safety tips](#).

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