

# 'Plan, pick and use portion control,' to prevent holiday weight gain

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

A University of Cincinnati (UC) nutritional studies professor has three key reminders for those of concerned about healthy eating during the holiday season: "Plan, Pick and Use Portion Control."

Debra Krummel, PhD, is the Ruth E. Rosevear Chair of Nutritional

Sciences at UC's College of Allied Health Sciences. An expert in women's health, she focuses her research in omega-3 supplementation for pregnant women.

She says holiday weight gain is a very common, and probably underreported, phenomenon. But instead of focusing on dieting the whole month, Krummel recommends focusing on maintaining your weight through the celebrations.

"If you feel like you're not enjoying the holidays, you're more likely to overindulge," she says. "Holidays hold a lot of meaning for everybody. It's important to enjoy them while maintaining a balanced diet at the same time."

To help with that goal, she offers the following recommendations:

## **Plan out your plate**

"If you visualize a plate, fill a quarter of it with protein, a quarter with grains and half with fruits and vegetables," says Krummel. "And put dessert on the plate, too! The idea is that you can only get so much food onto one plate."

You can plan out your week, too. If you're going to a party on the weekend, plan out your meals—and your exercise—to prepare for the extra calories.

"Just like you shouldn't go to the grocery store hungry, it's really bad to go to a party hungry," says Krummel. "Chop up some vegetables to munch on before the party and on your way there."

## **Pick water-based foods first**

When sampling the hors d'oeuvres, Krummel says to go for shrimp cocktail (not sausages) and veggies and hummus (over cheese and crackers) first. You'll get fuller much sooner.

## Use Portion Control

Krummel says there are several ways to help with [portion control](#): using smaller plates, avoiding seconds and making sure to put your fork down between bites and savor the meal.

"Denial is the worst thing," she says. "Take a couple of bites of your favorite foods, or bake cookies and muffins in smaller tins. You can still enjoy the muffin; it will just be half the size of a regular one."

In her own home, Krummel says her family uses smaller plates and substitutes more nutritious foods for traditional dishes, like having sweet potatoes instead of mashed potatoes—"but chocolate is the one given," she adds. "We can't give up our chocolate for the holidays!"

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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