

A few survival tips for holiday overeating

December 18 2015, by Mara Kerkez

We've all been there – reaching for another heap of potatoes or ambrosia, sampling everything on the dessert tray, maybe one too many eggnogs, and suddenly we're more stuffed than the rib roast and feeling guilty. Don't beat yourself up, it happens to the best of us. Here are some ways to bounce back after a food flub.

According to Len Kravitz, associate professor of Exercise Science at the University of New Mexico, [portion control](#) is key. However, if that ship has sailed, step away from the table and go for a walk. "When you eat more, move more," he said. "It will make you feel better. Most people tend to put on a few pounds during the holidays and without expending those calories, they'll keep the added weight on."

There is a new area of research called 'spontaneous movement' which indicates that people can burn upwards of 400 calories just by staying active during the day. By the way, that's one eggnog.

"Many new diet and exercise programs are starting with this 'move more' approach, and it seems to be very successful," Kravitz said.

Spontaneous movement refers to all non-exercise related movement such as walking from a distant parking spot to the mall; taking the stairs v. the elevator; doing a five minute power walk; even walking around the house from room to room. The research shows that people who just spontaneously keep moving during their waking day, are able to burn a lot of calories.

Peter Pribis, assistant professor of nutrition and dietetics in the UNM College of Education, Department of Individual, Family and Community Education believes we should just enjoy holiday get-togethers.

"A lot of atmosphere and memories are created around food. Maybe your family has a special pie or pudding recipe or other recipes that have been handed down over the years. What really matters for weight management and overall health is what we eat and do on a daily basis.

"Eating junk food everyday matters, not over-indulging during the holidays. Instead of agonizing about overeating, I say eat, and then go for a group walk or do something a bit more active later."

Pribis suggests that in the days following excessive food intake, skipping lunch and having a light dinner can reduce about 30 percent of daily calorie expenditure and help curtail weight gain. Skipping breakfast is not ideal as the body has spent the night using up its supply of nutrients and energy and requires fuel to boost the metabolism.

When the holidays are over, and the New Year begins, Pribis recommends opting for more healthy choices and introducing more salads, vegetables, fruits and nuts into our general diet.

"Try to become healthier overall and realize that those few special days over the course of a year won't hurt you or add that much weight," Pribis said.

Provided by University of New Mexico

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