

Five ways to avoid holiday weight gain

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(HealthDay)—It's fun to celebrate the holidays, but week after week of festivities can add up to weight gain if you aren't careful. Pre-planning is key if you don't want to start next year with an even bigger weight loss

goal.

- This is the perfect time of year to step up exercise. Adding 15 minutes a day every day can help burn off some of the extra calories you'll be eating at all those family dinners and office parties.
- Remember that you don't have to shun all healthy foods just because you're at a celebration. Use party food to reach your goal of 5 to 7 daily servings of fruits and vegetables—fill up on these choices rather than chips, cakes and cookies.
- Don't linger near the food—"out of sight, out of mind" is an effective strategy, especially when facing a tempting buffet.
- If the number of [social events](#) on your calendar is skyrocketing, pick just one or two where you'll relax your diet rules and allow yourself an extra serving of stuffing or slice of pie—whatever you look forward to the most. Decide on the splurge upfront, savor every bite, and don't go back for seconds; try to keep it between 500 and 700 calories.
- Holiday [weight](#) gain isn't from one or two meals, but from endlessly eating [food](#) that's available everywhere you turn. Swear off munching on treats at your co-workers' desks and on making midnight snacks of high-calorie leftovers by the light of the fridge.

Be strategic and selective about where and when you indulge and there won't be any backtracking on your weight loss.

More information: The Cleveland Clinic has more [tips](#) to avoid holiday weight gain.

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