

Tips to keep from overeating at party time

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(HealthDay)—Dieting can be hard on your social life.

You might think it's easier to avoid [social events](#) like cocktail parties and

even family gatherings because of the temptation to overeat. But there's no reason to deny yourself the joy of being with friends and loved ones when simple tricks will help you stay on course with your diet and still have a great time.

The first rule is don't arrive ravenous. That will just make it harder to eat smart when facing tempting [food](#). Take the edge off hunger before you go out with a [healthy snack](#) that's high in fiber, such as whole grain crackers with avocado slices or an ounce of nuts.

Once at the party, make it harder to grab food by holding a glass of seltzer in one hand. Take a sip every time a tray of hors d'oeuvres goes by. You don't have to deny yourself all treats, but it's easy to lose count if you take a tidbit from every platter that's offered.

Decide on two or three nibbles of more indulgent food. In general, your calories will go farther if you stay away from hot canapes, which are often pastry-based. Instead choose protein choices, like shrimp and chicken. If a cocktail hour will be followed by a full meal, focus on low-calorie fill-ups like raw vegetables, but skip the dip.

If the food is set up as a buffet, the rule here is to fill one plate with small portions of the items you really want to try and then move to another part of the room. Circulate and focus on the people rather than going back for a refill. It's a difficult behavior shift to make, but one that's essential in relearning priorities that minimize the emphasis you put on food.

Bonus tip: Offer to help your host with clean-up—keeping busy will keep you from overeating and give you "favored guest" status.

More information: The U.S. Department of Agriculture has more tips to help you [navigate a buffet](#) the healthy way.

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