

Four tips for mindful eating during the holidays

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Between cocktail parties after work, making cookies with the grandkids and the never-ending holiday get-togethers, it can feel like the season is

built for overindulging.

For those with dietary restrictions, the holidays can be tough. You don't want simply to avoid everything that isn't included in your diet, missing out on family traditions and feeling stuck on the sidelines. But at the same time, you don't want to throw caution to the wind and eat everything you want either.

"We have food-related celebrations and connections, and sometimes eating a little more than you normally would is a fun part of celebrating," Rachael Hartley, RD, the owner of Rachael Hartley Nutrition and author of "Gentle Nutrition" told Everyday Health.

Here are four tips to help you be more mindful of what you're eating and to steer a middle course between abstinence and gluttony during the holidays.

Eat more greens

Add a few more greens to your plate—no, that doesn't include creamed spinach—to boost fiber. It will not only keep you filling fuller longer, but will also aid in digestion.

Opt for a side salad packed with dark leafy greens like kale. According to Eat Well, "their fiber and [water content](#) helps greens fill you up and keep you feeling full, longer-which can help you lose weight."

Prepare for the stress

It's one thing to overindulge because you're in a celebratory mood. But it's a different thing all together if you're using food as a coping mechanism. If you get sad or stressed during this time of year, knowing

and understanding how you might use food to cope is important not just for your relationship with food, but also your relationship with the holidays in general.

"To avoid emotional [food](#) choices, set boundaries with yourself and others to limit distress. These can either be proactive, meaning planned in advance, or reactive, such as a reaction to a situation," advised Life Span. "To start, say 'no' to events or invitations that are less important to you. This [proactive approach](#) allows you to prioritize the gatherings that are most meaningful."

Indulge outside the holiday season

Allowing yourself to eat certain foods throughout the year—or even a few months before the holidays—can help keep you on track.

Introducing those foods you can't say "no" to in advance will lessen the cravings and the need to have them in bulk during the [holiday season](#).

"Indulging in the moment isn't necessarily a 'bad' thing, and if we break the power of 'bad,' then we break the power of guilt. And when we break the power of guilt, we change the way we feel about ourselves," noted Women's Running.

Stick to a schedule

Most [holiday](#) meals require cooks to stay on schedule—deciding what gets prepped the night before, the exact time the turkey needs to go in the over, etc. You should stick to your schedule too. If you normally eat certain meals at certain times, keep doing that. Avoid things like skipping lunch to leave "more room" for the big meal.

"We make more [informed decisions](#) about what to eat when we aren't

uncomfortably hungry," added Hartley.

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