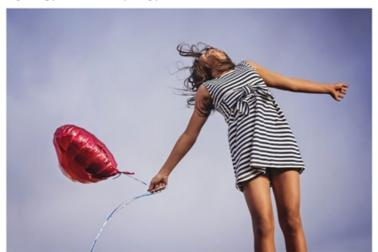## 12 Ways To Handle Holiday Eating

Every year, we hear about or experience holiday weight gain, but that doesn't have to be the case! Many people, especially those who are trying to lose weight, feel anxiety around the holidays. It's not just dealing with difficult family members, but the food that brings these nervous feelings. But guess what! You can still enjoy the holidays without feeling guilty about food or depriving yourself of everything you love.

Here are twelve ways to handle holiday eating while still enjoying the season and enjoying the food that you love.

1. **Bring a healthy dish**. If the party is potluck style, make sure to bring a dish that's on the healthier side, like blanched green beans, roasted brussel sprouts or a salad. This way, you know you'll have at least one healthy option at the dinner to balance out the other food.

2. **Eat before the party**. This might seem counterintuitive but having a snack, like a banana and peanut butter or a protein smoothie, can keep you from going overboard with treats and sweets at the party. You'll still get to enjoy the foods you love but you won't be so hungry that you dive in full force.

3. **Eat plenty of protein and high fiber foods**. Along the same note, when you're at a holiday meal, try to eat protein and high fiber foods like vegetables first to fill you up. Again, this will allow you to enjoy smaller portions of the food you love without going overboard.

4. **Know that the food will still be there later**. Oftentimes, when we feel like the food at a holiday meal will only be there that one time all year, we eat as much of it as we can and then end up feeling overstuffed and perhaps a little sick. Remind yourself that if you want cookies or turkey and cranberry sauce at other times of the year, you can make it! This isn't your only chance.

5. **Stop when it's not good anymore**. You know what I'm talking about - you've eaten enough and you're full but feel like you should finish your plate. When you're done, you're done. Don't keep eating just because it's in front of you.

6. **Say, "I'm full for now."** We all have those relatives who push more food on us. Feeding people is their way of showing love but when you're done eating and they offer you more, just say that you're full for now. It's not an outright rejection but it keeps the extra servings at bay.

7. **Take time before seconds**. It takes your body about 20 minutes to register that it's eating and that it's full. It's so easy to eat quickly when you love the food but take your time eating, put your fork down in between bites, and sit for a little while before deciding to go up for more. Remember, there are usually leftovers and you can always make your favorite foods again. Overeating won't make the food more enjoyable.

8. **Save a little room for dessert**. Still fill up with protein and fiber but save a little room for dessert if you want a piece of your favorite pie. No one likes to feel sick after dinner, so remember that the dessert will fill you up even more.

9. **Go on a family walk**. Get your friends and family involved by suggesting a walk before or after dinner. After is better, if it's still nice out, because moving helps you digest your food. Even suggest a game of football while the turkey is cooking to get in some extra movement.

10. **Freeze leftovers**. Rather than letting your leftovers sit in your fridge to eat for days after Thanksgiving, put meals into tupperware and freeze them. This way you can enjoy a thanksgiving leftovers meal once or twice a week for a couple weeks rather than trying to eat it all before it goes bad.

11. **Curb your alcohol intake**. While a few drinks at a holiday party is always enjoyable, make sure you set a limit before you head to the party. Not only do alcohol and many holiday cocktails add calories and sugar, but they also can cause you to eat a lot more than you normally would.

12. **Let go of food guilt.** Many people feel guilty after eating more rich or sugary foods after labeling them "bad." Remember that food is just food. It's there to enjoy and to fuel our bodies and there is no reason that guilt should be associated with anything that you eat. Enjoy the food, enjoy the company, and