

Happy Thanksgiving

Five tips to avoid holiday weight gain

Who doesn't love the smell of a warm kitchen during the holidays? They're designed around food and bringing family, old friends and new friends together. However, holidays can also be a detriment to your healthy lifestyle and cause you to lose your focus through the end of the year. -

But they don't have to.

"Think of fall as the perfect time to reassess the state of your health and prep for the challenges of the holiday season," says Alicia Rodriguez, corporate registered dietician at Life Time - The Health Way of Life Company. "When it comes to nutrition and avoiding weight gain, my motto is, keep it simple and easy."

Here are some tips to help you do the same.

Bulk up your plate with protein and vegetables

The side dishes at most holiday meals are often as good as the turkey

or ham, but stuffing and mashed potatoes aren't the best way to fill your plate. One way to avoid-weight gain is to build your plate with protein. This should be easy since holiday dinners revolve around meat. Second, fill your plate with side dishes that include vegetables. You may have a little spot left on your plate - use this space for your "indulgence." When you look at your plate, the goal is that the majority is still providing you with good nutrients and reduced carbohydrates.

Use the "fork" trick

Many of us go back for seconds, and even third helpings at holiday meals. This year, focus on asking yourself if you're enjoying your food. To help you answer this question, use the fork trick. Once you take a bite of food, place your fork down on the plate and let it go. Chew your food, swallow and then pick it up again. The key to this trick is letting go of the fork. This will remind you to slow down, enjoy your food and converse with friends and family.

Avoid the clean plate club

Growing up, many of us were always told "You can't leave the table

until you finish everything on your plate" and inevitably, we spent many nights sitting alone at the dinner table. These days, Rodriguez advises her clients to eat until they are full and, if their plate is not clean, it's OK. Focus on one plate of food, slow down and be careful not to overeat. Overfeeding is never really a healthy thing to do.

Share your dessert with a loved one

After a satisfying meal, it is hard to avoid the sweet smells of pumpkin or warm apple pie. If you choose not to skip dessert, share a small slice with a loved one or new friend. If you are hosting, designate one family member to bring dessert to limit the endless selection of pies and reduce the urge to over indulge.

Make like a turkey and trot out the door

Start your holiday with a new tradition this year and gather the family to do something active. Take a walk to a local park, put together a family friendly flag football game, rake the leaves up in the yard (and jump into them) or encourage the family to sign up for a run/walk event such as the

Life Time Turkey Day 5K or Commitment Day 2014.

Holidays are a time to be thankful for family, friends and everything in between. Savor the moment, really take time to taste your food, get out and have some fun, and avoid the-holiday weight gain. (BPT)



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