



Keep Health a Priority During the Holidays!

The holidays are almost here! This season can bring much happiness and great memories as we celebrate with others, but it can also be a time of year that comes with potential stress and health setbacks. Here are some ideas to help keep your health a priority throughout the holiday season.

Setting Realistic Expectations for Yourself

- Identify which of your health goals are realistic to continue to work on throughout the holidays, then prioritize and focus on these healthy habits.
- Consciously plan time for yourself to relax and reduce stress. When you are feeling stressed, try stress relieving activities such as breathing practices, meditation, walking, listening to music, or talking with someone.
- Focus on foods that make you feel energized and ready to take on this stressful and exciting time. Keep this same goal in mind when planning for the holiday “extras”: savor and enjoy them, and try not to eat (or drink) so much that you feel sick and unmotivated.

Planning Ahead for Holiday Events

- It’s helpful to try to find out in advance which foods and drinks will be served. By doing this, you can think about which foods you will choose and this can make it easier to make healthier choices in the moment. Bring a healthy dish or low calorie beverage to share with others at potluck style events.
- Continue to eat balanced meals and snacks throughout the holiday season and include fruits and vegetables with your holiday meals.
- Have a healthy snack or small meal before going to an event. Try to not skip any meals: by not showing up too hungry, it can be easier to make mindful choices.
- Stay hydrated and be aware of beverages with added sugars. If choosing sugar sweetened beverages, try alternating with water or opting for water instead. Add fruits like citrus, frozen berries or mint leaves to your plain water or sparkling water for added flavors.
- Think about what you are going to do about alcohol. You can limit your alcoholic beverages or choose other beverages without alcohol. Try some new mock-tails!

Incorporate Physical Activity

- Many benefits of physical activity include reduced stress, improved sleep, weight management and increased energy. Even small amounts of activity (10 minutes) can be beneficial for your health.
- Try to be active in any extra time you have and find activities that you enjoy doing. Plan your activity, and schedule it into your day. This will make it more likely that you will achieve your activity goals.
- Think about making physical activity part of the holidays or a special event. Plan some gatherings around activities versus foods. Explore different activities that you can do with others such as dancing, walking, snowshoeing, ice skating or anything else that sounds fun.

Practice Mindful Eating

- Try being mindful of what you are eating, how much you are eating, and your level of fullness which can help to avoid overeating.
- If your body is giving you signs of physical hunger (examples of stomach rumbling, emptiness, low energy etc.), honor that hunger by pausing your busy schedule to eat a balanced meal or nutritious snack.

For more motivation and support, join the **Project Zero Challenge** to help you keep your health a priority. For people who want to maintain their weight during the holiday season, you can enter your weight before and after the season as part of the challenge. For anyone who is not interested in thinking about your weight, you can solely focus on working on your healthy habits to support your overall well-being (just click “Cancel” on the pop-up that asks for your weight). Everyone who registers will receive email reminders with tips and tricks to maintain balance and health. Login to wellworksforyoulogin.com to register.

Article provided by Emily Barrett, RDN, LD. She is an inpatient and outpatient Wellness Dietitian at Tahoe Forest. Schedule an appointment with a Registered Dietitian or other supportive health professionals to create a personalized plan that works for you. Call the Tahoe Forest Center for Health to schedule today, 530-587-3769.