

Holiday Dining

Healthful Eating For People Who Love Food

by Tom Nikkola

(NAPSA)—It is possible to enjoy the holiday season without losing sight of your exercise and nutrition programs. By setting ground rules, you can enjoy holiday parties and celebrations without overdoing the food—or starving yourself. Consider these simple ideas:

1. **Don't succumb to peer pressure.** If you'll be around other people indulging in sweets, treats and other unhealthy delights, be prepared. If you do choose to partake in some less healthful options, do it because you decided to, not because someone else talked you into it.

2. **Good prep leads to a well-balanced party.** Completing a workout prior to a dinner party or other event can help you better metabolize the food you're about to eat. While you likely won't burn more calories than you consume, exercise increases insulin sensitivity and powerfully prepares your body to store more glycogen, meaning more of those carbohydrates will likely be stored in your muscle instead of being converted to fat.

3. **Water, water and more water.** Constantly sipping on water is a great way to stay "full." A couple of glasses before a meal can be a great way to keep a lid on food intake. In fact, a recent American Chemical Society presentation said drinking two glasses of water prior to a meal can produce greater weight loss than consuming the meal alone.

4. **Go for the veggies first.** Besides being loaded with nutrients, the considerable fiber and water found in vegetables can help you avoid overeating. If



You can maintain your weight and still enjoy holiday treats.

you're dining out, start with a salad. If you're at a party, look for the vegetable tray.

5. **Got protein?** Keep it lean. Some fat in the diet is important. And the fat found in pasture-raised or grass-fed animal protein even has some health-promoting effects. Chances are, however, when you're at a party or going out for dinner, the meat wasn't raised that way. Look for a lean source of protein, such as grilled chicken, fish, turkey or lean cuts of beef.

6. **Save the sweets and carbs for last.** If you stay true to the ideas above, you'll likely feel pretty satisfied. Sweet potatoes, regular potatoes and rice are good sources of carbohydrates and they're gluten-free. If you still crave the occasional high-carbohydrate treat, be sure to consume a balanced meal of vegetables and protein first.

• *Nikkola is nutrition program manager for Life Time Fitness.*