Holiday Success

The holiday season brings many mixed messages about food and drink. It can be hard to navigate for those who want to maintain a healthy weight, as so many of the foods are high in calories, fat, salt, sugar, and alcohol. No single food causes weight gain. What’s important is the total amount of calories eaten. Here are some tips that you may find helpful:

- Make snacks last 15 minutes and meals at least ½ hour. By eating slowly, your body has time to register that you are full. Wait before taking seconds!

- **Stop** eating when you feel slightly full; you don't need to "clean your plate".

- Enjoy the higher calorie foods that are special to you in **smaller portions**. And avoid eating while standing, especially within reach of the buffet table!

- **Ask yourself** what you really want to eat at parties and buffets. Then choose only those items and leave the less attractive ones. Avoid the less desirable nibbles.

- Include do-able **physical activity** into your daily holiday schedule, like a 20 minute walk, 10-20 curl-ups and push-ups, and some stretches. Exercise can decrease your appetite, help you sleep better, increase your metabolism, and reduce holiday stress.

- Fill up on plain **vegetables**. The added nutrition from vegetables is undeniable, and the fiber will help curb your appetite.

- **Alternate** alcoholic drinks with plain water, diet soda, or sparkling water. The rule is one alcoholic drink for women, two for men.

- **Keep food records** to help you see objectively what you are eating. Research has shown that those who keep food records between Thanksgiving and New Year’s lose weight rather than gain it.

- **Keep a weight record**. According to an article written by Suzanne Phelan in the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology (June 2008): "These findings underscore the need for individuals to engage in consistent self-monitoring if they are to remain successful at weight control during challenging high-risk periods, such as the holidays."

- **Don’t skip meals** on the day of a celebration. Instead eat smaller portions if you feel you will be eating more at one meal.