



Holiday Game Plan

By

Nicole Carlson RD, LD

The holiday season is here; do you have a game plan for your diet? All too often the holidays become an excuse for Americans to give up on their nutrition goals. People say that this time of year only comes around once a year, so go big or go home. If it were only one meal we were splurging on it might not be so bad; but in reality, the season is two months of holiday treats and massive meals at multiple gatherings with family and friends. By the end of the season you could be up ten pounds just from 'splurging.' However, this does not have to be the case; all you need is to prep a game plan.

According to the Calorie Control Council, the average American consumes 4,500 calories on Thanksgiving Day. Although this may be an overestimated amount for you, chances are you are consuming more than your typical 1,500 calories. So why do we tend to consume so many calories during this meal? For many of us, these foods are not on our typical menu from day to day. When we see mashed potatoes with loads of butter, juicy turkey and creamy green bean casserole, we end up throwing in the towel and filling our plates higher and higher. And when it comes to desserts, usually sky's the limit for those tasty treats. Thankfully, there is a way to enjoy the much anticipated holiday food while consuming a modest amount of calories.

When it comes to meals with a variety of dishes you'd like to try, the smaller the better. Aim for your meat portion to be the size of a deck of cards (3-4 oz.). For side dishes such as potatoes, vegetables, casseroles or stuffing, stick to the size of a tennis or baseball (½ cup). Watch out for gravies and sauces, they tend to be loaded with fat and sodium. A tablespoon or two should be plenty. As for the dinner rolls, try taking a half and go easy on the butter. When approaching the dessert table, pick two items that you can't refuse. Take a small portion of one with the meal and save the other for later in the afternoon to have with a cup of coffee. Another tip for keeping your portions in check is to eat slowly. Set your fork down in between bites and enjoy the conversation around the table. The slower you eat, the more time your stomach will have to tell you that you are full and seconds or thirds are not as likely.

The holidays do not have to be the time of year that your buttons bulge. Take charge of your diet and be mindful of your choices. You can enjoy all your favorite foods while staying within your calorie budget. With better control of your portions this holiday season you can make it through without negative outcomes for your health.



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