

NEWeighs Fact Sheet

SUCCESSFUL EATING STRATEGIES FOR SPECIAL EVENTS -HOLIDAYS, WEEKENDS, AND PARTIES-

Parties, weekends, and holiday customs and ceremonies, along with personal memories, are often associated with food. Many feel obligated to continue family food traditions which may counter our concerns for healthful eating. Obviously, eating and special events go together. In fact, overeating in a convivial, holiday atmosphere is very natural and traditional. Setting eating limits that are too restrictive may not only limit the positive social and psychological effects of celebrations, but may in the long run lead to failure and discouragement. Acknowledging situations that may easily lead to overeating will help you to realistically confront difficulties and set up strategies for success. A minor lapse does not have to be a relapse, or a collapse. Remember, proper **pre-**planning prevents poor performance. Establishing support systems, planned lapses, and a scheduled return to routine eating and exercise programs **before** the festivities begin, contributes to overall eating management. The goal is not to be spooked by the celebrations, but to enjoy them!

BANKING CALORIES

- Saving calories the week before a planned event can offer you guilt-free additional foods on the day of the celebration.
- Disregard the government's banking strategy. Avoid deficit spending – save before you spend. You won't have to play catch-up and you will feel more in control.
- Save throughout the week, rather than the day of the party. Not eating all day before the special occasion may very likely lead to overeating.
- Try to follow your regular eating exercise the day of the party. Keeping other aspects of your day constant will incorporate celebrations into your overall eating plan to help minimize the urge to splurge!
- Bank 200 – 300 calories maximum each day to insure that you are not depriving yourself of important nutrients and energy.

BEFORE THE PARTY BEGINS...

- You may want to check with your host to see what you may bring. Be sure it's a food you like that is low in fat and calories.
- Expecting party menus to consist of raw vegetables and low-calorie dips is unrealistic and risky.
- Arrive fashionably late and leave fashionably full - - not stuffed! Fill your special occasions with alternative activities. Make new acquaintances and renew old ones. Refocusing on fun rather than food may provide you with a healthier perspective, and a happier outlook.
- Remember to set goals for after the party, as well as during the party. After serious

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consideration, chances are you will feel better in the long run if you plan to feel good rather than guilty when you leave the party.

- Read this brochure before you leave to go to the party!

PARTY TIME!

Appetizers

- Remember, appetizers are often appetizers that are laden with calories, and loaded with fat.
- 1 cup of peanuts (a handful for some) on the end table next to where you are sitting, waiting for dinner to start, can contain up to 840 calories.
- Arriving fashionably late can be one of your best defense strategies against consuming a meals worth of calories before the meal.
- Keep moving. Sit away from the food. Socialize in non-food rooms (if you can find one). Hosts may be particularly helpful in setting up food-free rooms.
- Before you eat something, briefly ask yourself how you are feeling. Are you tired, bored, uncomfortable, or do you really want to eat. This does not have to be an oppressive practice that spoils your celebration, but rather an enlightening one that can help you deal directly with difficult social situations.
- Munch on vegetables, and unless it is low-fat, avoid the dip (remember, you are what you eat!).
- If you can, plan what you intend to eat for dinner first, and then decide upon your appetizers.
- Remember, mulling around before and after dinner can be boring, and boredom often leads to unnecessary eating out of distraction. Engage in activities such as walking, games, or playing with the kids as alternative distractions to eating.
- Use a napkin rather than a small lap plate.
- Ask yourself if you are experiencing physical, emotional, or situational hunger. This is not to stop you from eating but to slow it down and better understand it.

CREATIVE VISUALIZATION: TELL-A-VISION

- Remember, the 5 **P's** – **ProperPlanningPreventsPoorPerformance**, apply to special, as well as every day events.
- One of the best ways to confront difficult situations is to imagine what you would like to do before the event, and practice, or rehearse it. The more you can visualize and rehearse the event, the more likely you are to be successful on the day of the performance. Plan ahead what you are going to do and not what you are not going to do and practice a few minutes a day.
- Try to imagine obtainable goals and behaviors, otherwise you may end up being discourage

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and disappointed on the day of the event.

- Tell-your-visions to your friends/significant others and let them know how they can help you around food and eating situations. Asking for assistance is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength and responsibility. Not asking for help may very well be a sign of denial and defeat. When you know you have a problem you may be much more successful at confronting it when you have the understanding and support of your family and friends.
- Read this brochure before going to stop days prior to the big event.

PARTY PREPARATIONS

- Ask someone else in the house to be the official taste-tester.
- Cakes and pies are less likely to be eaten before the party than cookies.
- Modify recipes to decrease fat and calories. Keep it a secret.
- Offer small portions – let your guests ask for seconds.
- Simple can be elegant, and easier on the host and guests.
- Plan to give your guests “doggie bags” after the main event.
- Prepare to freeze some of the leftovers in small containers for immediate freezing.
- It’s better to clog up your garbage disposal than your arteries – throw unwanted leftovers out or compost them.
- Ask for help in cleaning up. Have freezer containers and “doggie bags” ready in advance.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. For buffet entertaining it is a good idea to serve in smaller dishes, and to replenish each with a new hot or cold plate, rather than refilling one large serving.
- Include the kids in all the aspects of food preparation, presentation and cleanup activities. They can usually use the extra taste-testing calories, learn what really is inside foods, and practice developing healthy eating habits and attitudes.
- Prepare foods when you are at your best and your defenses are high. Morning if often a good time.
- Eat before you prepare foods.

Alcohol

- Alcohol does three things that may complicate your party plans:
 - **Alcohol stimulates your appetite.** This is particularly important if you’ve banked all your calories on the day of the big event and you arrive hungry.
 - **Alcohol lowers your defenses and defense mechanisms.** The best defense is a good offense. Too much alcohol may be offensive to your diet as well as others. You may

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arrive with the best intentions, but leave yourself and your friends disappointed.

- **Alcohol is high in calories.** Four ounces, depending on how it is made can cost you over 200 calories. Dry wines, non-alcoholic and lite beers, homemade wine spritzers (wine and seltzer) are lower in calories than mixed drinks – especially milk or cream-based varieties, sherries, and party punches.
- Avoid immediately responding to “Hey, how ya doing, would you like a drink?” particularly if you haven’t eaten all day. Eat something before, or while you drink.
- Mix your own drinks. You’ll be more in control of the situation and can use less alcohol and more water or diet soda if you prefer.
- Have a drink of sparkling water between alcoholic drinks.
- Often you or your host may feel uncomfortable if you’re not holding a drink in your hand. Put a lime or lemon wedge into sparkling water or fruit juice to dress it up and keep everybody happy.

The Main Event

- Taste, rather than eat. Remember: **smaller portions lead to smaller proportions.**
- Choose the foods you prefer to eat after you’ve taste-tested them.
- Avoid splurging on foods you really don’t like.
- If you taste-test you will feel less guilty leaving a small amount of something you don’t like.
- When taste-testing, use a napkin instead of a plate.
- After you taste-tested and decided which foods you would like to eat, use a plate and sit down comfortably, and concentrate on the great tastes.
- Eat slowly, put your spoon or fork down between each bite.
- Use chopsticks.
- If eating with others presents a difficult situation for you, you may want to make a conscious effort to minimize conversation so you may concentrate more on what you are eating and how it tastes.
- Arrive late at the table through lingering conversation or a planned bathroom break.
- Leave the table soon after eating – avoid talking over a mound of dessert distractions.
- Talk someone into going for a walk with you to get some fresh air.
- Keep in mind that food is a family affair. There are probably a number of people in the gathering that could use your support in their mission for better nutrition. Enlist them in your efforts as well.

Buffet Dining

- Try not to constantly check out the food table or watch what others are eating.

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- Survey the table for foods you think you would like to try. Then have someone else fix a plate for you.
- Be last in line.
- When you've completed your selection, be sure to find a comfortable place to sit down, eat slowly and enjoy your food, away from the majority of distractions.
- After you've completed your meal socialize away from the buffet table.

Just Desserts

- Don't desert desserts. Appropriate meal planning for special occasions should include some room for "sweet" treats. Neglecting dessert planning can lead to feelings of deprivation and disappointment. Allow for some flexibility by giving yourself permission to have a small portion of sweet. Otherwise, when faced with the dessert dilemma you may impulsively eat everything. Again, scope out the options and splurge with a moderate amount of what you really want. Don't waste your calories on something you don't really like. Often, desserts look a lot better than they actually taste. Here's where taste-testing may be helpful. Also, remember that this is a great place where your friends and family can help. Determine what type of help you need, and ask for it.

THE PARTY'S OVER

Weekends, parties and holiday celebrations can be as stressful as they are enjoyable. Emotionally, holidays in particular can be very stressful when thinking about holidays past and future. Loss of a loved one or living alone can add additional stress. Exhaustion, tensions, and over-scheduling can further compound difficult social situations. Be aware that almost everyone overeats around celebrations, and that a lapse is easily ended by planning to return to your regular food and exercise routine soon after the party's over.