



## How to Avoid Weight Gain During Holiday Season

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Gaining weight during holidays is a common concern for many of us. During holidays, we may overeat, spend most of the time relaxing and sitting on the couch, and consume calorie-rich foods. In fact, from middle of November until mid-January, adults gain an average of 1 pound (0.5 kg). This becomes a problem, as most people do not lose this extra baggage. Therefore, holidays are one of the most significant contributor to your total annual weight gain.

### Here are some tips to help us avoid weight gain during the holiday season:

- **Snack wisely:** During the holiday season, we find cookies and other goodies at home and workplaces. Do not munch on these just because there is food around, even when you are not hungry. It is best to avoid snacking altogether.  
  
If you are hungry and need a snack, reach out for fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. They are filling & do not contain added sugars or unhealthy fats. Added sugar and fats lead to weight gain.
- **Keep control on taste tasting:** Remember, Even small bites of holiday dishes can add up in calories. Make sure that you are not hungry while cooking. A small bite is probably more than enough for tasting the food.
- **Watch your portion size:** When the holidays arrive, it can be easy to overload your plate. Those who eat larger portions tend to gain weight more quickly than those who do not. The best way to overcome this problem is to control portion sizes.
- **Use smaller plates:** We may attend many dinner parties and potlucks during the holiday season. However, these celebrations do not have to wreck your diet if you eat from a smaller plate. People tend to consume larger portions from big plates, which may lead to overeating.
- **Include enough lean protein in meals:** Holiday meals are typically rich in carbs and fats. Including protein in meals may reduce calorie intake by reducing hunger and appetite. Protein increases our metabolism, thus helps in controlling weight gain. Include poultry, fish, lentils, and beans as lean protein sources.

- **Eat more fiber-rich foods:** Fibers give feeling of fullness. Increased dietary fiber can reduce total calorie intake, which may help prevent weight gain over the holidays. Try to eat lots of fruits and veggies with holiday food.
- **Limit the desserts:** Dessert is everywhere during the holiday season. This often leads to excessive sugar consumption, which is a common cause of weight gain. Do not eat every treat, instead focus on favorites. Try to avoid eating larger portions, eat smaller portion slowly, avoid overindulging.
- **Remember, liquid calories also count:** During the holidays, it is common to consume alcohol, soda, and other calorie-rich beverages. These drinks can contribute a significant amount of sugar and empty calories to your diet, causing weight gain. It is best to limit your intake of high-calorie beverages.
- **Bring a healthy dish to share:** It is common to overeat high-calorie, high-fat foods at the holiday parties. Simple trick is to bring some healthy dish to share. This way you will have something to eat, matching your diet goals.
- **Modify your recipes:** Holiday and festive food is usually overloaded with calories most of the time. The best idea is to tweak your recipes to reduce calories and make them healthier. We can substitute some ingredients with healthy nutritious ones. In addition, we can use healthy cooking methods like baking and boiling instead of frying.
- **Do mindful eating:** Do not rush while eating, eat and chew food slowly. Avoid eating while watching TV or minimize any other distractions. Recognize your body's fullness signals and consume fewer calories



- **Plan ahead:** Planning can go a long way towards preventing holiday weight gain. If you have parties to attend on the calendar, ask the hosts what is on the menu and decide what and how much you will eat, ahead of time.
- **Avoid processed food:** Processed foods often contain excess sugar or sodium and unhealthy fats that take a toll on your weight and overall health.

To prevent weight gain, opt for whole foods and cook your meals from scratch.

- **Avoid overeating /second serving:** Holiday meals typically have several options to choose from, which leads people to serve themselves second and even thirds serving.

The calories from multiple helpings can quickly add to weight gain. So limit yourself to just one plate.

- **Be active with family and friends:** Sedentary lifestyle like watching TV sitting on a couch for longer hours is typical during holidays. This leads to weight gain. Do some physical activity, even simple walks with family helps in controlling weight gain.

- **Check your weight regularly:** Stepping on the scale regularly during the holidays will help you to remain cautious before significant weight gain sets in. People who weigh themselves regularly maintain or lose weight better than those who do not weigh themselves.

Staying on top of our weight goals can become difficult during the holiday season. Some mindful tips and tricks can help keeping our family and ourselves healthy, happy, and weight-conscious during this time of year. If we are diligent, we can avoid weight gain and enjoy this festive season to the fullest.

## References

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