

# Stay Mindful with 4 Tips for Holiday Eating

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The holidays are a time to enjoy friends, family and food. And, contrary to popular belief, you can have all three without putting on the extra pounds!

On average, [Americans gain approximately one to two pounds during the holiday season.](#)

🐦 While this weight gain isn't dramatic, research shows it tends to stick and accumulate over the years. Luckily, those pounds can be avoided through mindful eating in moderation and a few simple strategies.

In preparation for a big holiday party or feast, do not skip meals throughout the day as this may result in overeating. It is especially important to have breakfast, as research shows that those who eat this important morning meal tend to consume fewer calories throughout the day. Include lots of fiber in your diet by eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Fiber-rich foods are high in volume and will satisfy hunger, but are lower in calories.

Holiday meals tend to be large, buffet-style and include second and third helpings. While one might not eat an entire cake, a common mistake is eating large portions of foods that are perceived as healthy. It's important to include nutrient-rich foods in your diet, but also remember that these foods have calories as well and should be eaten in moderation. Using this approach at the holiday dinner table will allow you to maintain a healthful eating plan — one that can also include dessert.

There are many strategies to help you avoid overeating. Using a smaller plate, for instance, allows you to put less food on your plate and encourages proper portion sizes. Also, start by filling your plate with vegetables and salad before going to the entrees and desserts. Eating a salad before your meal can help you eat fewer calories overall. Eat slowly and savor every bite, and before you go back for seconds wait 10 minutes to see if you really are still hungry.

Finally, after dinner, get some physical activity. This is a great time to go for a walk and catch up with family members, or play catch or a game of basketball with the kids.

For more information on how to eat healthfully, contact a [registered dietitian nutritionist](#) in your area.