

HOLIDAY STRESS AND WEIGHT GAIN- TIPS TO AVOID BOTH



The holidays are fast approaching, and along with them come increased stress and weight gain. Although we certainly enjoy the company of family and friends, stress this time of year can be a burden for some people. Many times, stress can lead to over-eating and even depression. This is the time of year that significant depression can occur for some people. It is important to recognize if stress and depression become overwhelming, and seek professional help if needed.



Some tips to reduce stress

- Keep in mind that there is no “perfect” holiday party or dinner- forget those pictures that you see in the magazine or greeting card- spending time with friends & family is more important
- Plan ahead to avoid last-minute surprises
- Instead of buying and cooking all of the food for a party- have a potluck. Most people enjoy making and bringing their favorite dish.
- Have a tree-trimming party- everyone can bring an ornament and help decorate the tree
- Take a break and go for a walk, or take a hot bath
- Avoid too much alcohol- you will not sleep as well if you have been drinking
- Try to stick to your daily routines as much as possible.
- Take a few deep breaths when you feel stressed. Stand up and Stretch your muscles.
- Send an electronic greeting card to friends and family- this will avoid having to write out each envelope and drive to the mailbox or post office
- Send a gift card instead of trying to find the perfect present
- Give home-made gifts such as jams/cookies/breads
- Do not try a new recipe when the whole family is coming to dinner- stick to what you know
- Finish your gift shopping early to avoid crowds
- Shop on line and have the gift shipped directly to the recipient
- Make a shopping list BEFORE going to the store- and never grocery shop when you are hungry
- Delegate tasks to other family members- everyone can help to clean the house and load the dishwasher
- DO NOT expect to please everyone- Your great aunt made the very best pumpkin pie- acknowledge this and move on. Don't try to compete.
- Make a budget and stick to it.



Tips to avoid weight gain

- Load your plate with vegetables and lean meat- avoid the stuffing and potatoes
- Try fruit or dark chocolate instead of high calorie, high fat dessert
- If you just can't resist the cookie try- pick the one you want the most and only have one.
- Avoid high calorie alcoholic beverages- a strawberry daiquiri has about 160 calories, a margarita has about 150 calories, a glass of red wine has about 90 calories. Try sparkling water with lemon= 0 calories!
- Try sugar free hot cocoa or apple cider to quench the sweet craving
- Have your pumpkin or apple pie without the ice cream or whipped cream topping
- If you are the cook- avoid sampling—chew gum or nibble on celery, nuts or carrot sticks while cooking
- Choose fresh or steamed vegetables instead of creamy casseroles
- Serve dried cranberries instead of high calorie cranberry sauce
- Exercise at least 20-30 minutes every day
- Take a walk after a big meal- helps to burn off calories and reduce stress
- Avoid high fat/sugar/oily foods- fill the plate with vegetables and fruits.
- Choose a salad instead of potatoes- and skip the dressing or gravy
- Try plain popcorn instead of chips
- Have a potluck contest – who can bring the prettiest vegetable tray
- Start a new tradition- have a contest for the lowest calorie/fat dessert
- Never go to a party or buffet hungry- drink a large glass of water or warm tea/eat a cup of carrot sticks, celery or nuts before leaving for the party
- Volunteer you and your family to work in a soup kitchen instead of cooking a big meal



NEVER drink alcohol and drive- choose a designated driver

