

Senior Connection: Three Steps for Enjoying the Holidays in a Healthy and Joyful Way Plus Avoiding Weight Gain

Step One

- Eat just two or three meals during the holidays without feeling guilty about what you ate. In other words, pig out if you want to with no more than three meals.
- Have a piece of pecan pie or pumpkin pie with whipped cream or the dessert of your choice. But only one per meal.
- Maybe a glass of wine or two.
- Most important, enjoy the fellowship with family, relatives and friends.
- Leave political discussions for another time.

Step Two

- The rest of the holiday period uses some easy-to-follow tips.
- **Mindful Portions:** Take sensible portion sizes to avoid overeating.
- **Focus on Vegetables:** Start with a salad. Begin your meal with a salad or vegetable soup to fill up on fiber before diving into higher- calorie options.
- **Roasted Veggies:** Incorporate a variety of roasted vegetables to add flavor, color and nutrients.
- **Healthy Substitutions** Lean Meats: Choose leaner cuts of meat and avoid heavy sauces. For turkey, consider skinless options.
- **Alternative Ingredients** Use Greek yogurt instead of sour cream or cream in recipes and swap out sugar for natural sweeteners like honey or maple syrup when baking.
- **Slow Down:** take your time to enjoy each bite and engage in the conversation.

Step Three

- **Additional Things to Consider:**
- Weight gain during the holiday season is quite common, although the amount gained can vary and it may not be as high as people think. According to research published in the journal of Obesity, the average weight gain during the holidays is anywhere from 0.8 pounds to just under 2pounds. Unfortunately, that extra weight stays on and cumulative weight gain can add up over the years.
- Eat protein in the morning. This helps to control appetite.
- Avoid snacks during the day.
- Alleviate stress through exercise. Continue your normal exercise routine.
- Build holiday-related activities around something other than food.

What if you could do one thing today that would slow your body's aging process. You can. You can stop eating sugar. As you get older your cells go downhill, but if you consume a lot of sugar, they go downhill seven times faster. To repeat: eating a lot of sugar causes your body to age at seven times its natural rate.