

## Maintain No Gain

The Holidays are an exciting time of the year. But between family gatherings and parties, stress and everything else it is a time when people tend to gain weight. Between mid-November through the first of January, adults gain an average of one pound to two pounds.

This may not seem like a lot, but for most, people tend not to lose weight during the holiday period, but gain.

Here are some tips to help you avoid weight gain.

- **Be Active.** Try to exercise at least 150 minutes each week. That averages out to be about 30 minutes 5 days a week.
- **Snack smart.** Candies and cookies can be tempting. Plan for healthy snacks that center around protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
- **Watch your portions.** We tend to overdo serving sizes. Take smaller portions and limit the number of choices. Also using a smaller plate can help.
- **Be Mindful of what you eat.** Don't be in a rush. Eat slowly. Relax. Pay attention to what you are eating rather than thinking about other things.
- **Don't be sleep deprived.** Lack of sleep is common during the holidays and may cause weight gain. Those who don't sleep enough tend to consume more calories and exercise less.
- **Manage your stress.** Stress can result in high cortisol that is a hormone that is released in response to stress. High levels of cortisol can lead to weight gain and cause you to crave more junk food. Try meditation, yoga, deep breathing and exercise to manage stress.
- **Use MyPlate to eat healthy.** Balance your meals with protein, carbohydrates and fat. Holiday meals tend to be heavy on carbohydrates. It is important to include some protein with every meal. Don't forget to include fruits and vegetables and dairy. Also include whole grains that are rich in fiber.
- **Eat plenty of fiber.** Fiber can help you feel full and help reduce your caloric intake which may prevent weight gain. Many holiday favorites lack fiber. Do your best to include vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, nuts and seeds in your meal.
- **Choose sweets wisely and savor them.** We often overdo sweets and desserts. Excessive sugar can lead to weight gain due to the fact that many of our sweets also contain fat. Plan your desserts, eat smaller amounts and savor the flavor.
- **Limit beverages with calories.** Alcoholic beverages, sodas and sweetened drinks can add empty calories to your diet. Try controlling your weight by limiting your caloric beverages and choose zero calorie beverages.
- **Weigh yourself regularly.** Stepping on the scales regularly can help prevent weight gain. Some may check their weight daily while others only once or twice a week.
- **Have someone to help support you.** It is sometimes to do it alone. Have a friend or relative who can support you and help to keep you accountable.

Texas A&M AgriLife will help you this year by offering a free program Maintain No Gain. This is a six weeks challenge that will begin November 18 and will run through January 1. The challenge will be to

not gain weight. During the time, there will be incentives to help you eat healthy and exercise. There will be weekly emails. There will also be prizes each week. Also there will be drawing for prizes for those who complete Maintain No Gain. Individuals can sign up by calling 817-598-6168 or email: [kl-smith@tamu.edu](mailto:kl-smith@tamu.edu).