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Wise Notes for Consumers

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10 Simple Tips to Keep Holiday Weight Off Your Hips

The holidays are upon us ... with Halloween candy and Thanksgiving behind us and Christmas, and New Year's Eve before us, the recipe for weight gain is set. For many people, a gain of 5 to 10 pounds is common during the holidays. However, getting the weight off can be a challenge. Here are 10 steps to prevent weight gain this year.

1. Don't deprive yourself. Just have three luscious bites instead of three pieces of pie. If you allow yourself to have a few bites instead of depriving yourself, you will feel less like eating the whole pie later.

2. Increase your exercise time by 10 to 20 minutes – either all at once or throughout your day. According to the American College of Sports medicine you can get your exercise in 10-minute segments of time and it is just as effective as if you exercise for a full 30 minutes.

3. Ask yourself if it's worth it. I absolutely think you should eat your favorite treats on Thanksgiving. If you look forward to stuffing or pumpkin pie all year long, then please feel free to indulge. But certain foods really aren't that special, and you shouldn't waste your calories on eating them.

4. Embrace seasonal produce. We tend to think of Thanksgiving as a time when you eat turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes, but there's so much healthy (and non-starchy) produce in season. Embrace this abundance by featuring things like different types of squash, leafy greens, pumpkin, apples, pears, cranberries and pomegranates. Make a side dish that feels like Thanksgiving but has a healthier twist, and make the seasonal produce the star of the show.

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5. Eat regular meals. During the holidays it is often tempting to skip meals. Starving yourself all day and then eating all evening is not an effective plan for weight maintenance.

6. Sleep 7 to 8 hours a night. Studies have proven a link between sleep deprivation and weight gain. People who don't get enough sleep often have a challenge curbing feelings of hunger.

7. Plan what and how much you will eat at parties – choose to take a small piece of cake, but skip the chips. If you have a general plan, you will be able to enjoy the party.

8. Drink water – It has zero calories and can prevent mindless eating. If we drink water before meals, we will also feel less hungry and be able to enjoy the meal before us.

9. Use herbs and spices in place of salt. Rub a turkey breast with smoked paprika, sage and extra-virgin olive oil; mince fresh tarragon into stuffing; blend minced garlic cloves into mashed potatoes; sprinkle turmeric powder into sweet potatoes

10. Remember: Everything in moderation. Moderation is the key to not feeling deprived and keeping yourself in balance. Whether it pertains to your exercise program, your healthy eating plan or any other activities, making small, but consistent adjustments will help you stay on track, feel better and perform at your best.

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