Cheers to YOU!

Nutrition Tips for Staying Healthy around Holidays and Parties

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Life is full of events that take us off of our daily routine, especially when it comes to nutrition and exercise. But a party with treats and drinks doesn't mean your goals have to go out the window. Maybe you CAN have your cake and eat it too! When holidays are approaching, it can be extremely helpful to devise an eating plan that includes strategies for handling nutritionally precarious situations. Here are some of my tried-and-true strategies to implement when preparing for your next party, event, or vacation.

- **Take preventative measures**: If you tend to overeat at parties, try eating a low-calorie snack to help curb your appetite before leaving the house. Chances are if you arrive at the party ravenous, you will overeat.
- **Don't vow to eat nothing at a special event**: In doing so, you will just be setting yourself up for failure and subsequent guilt. Instead, limit your selections to foods you don't typically eat and keep your portion sizes under control.
- **When it comes to seconds, use the 20- minute rule:** It typically takes 20 minutes after you have eaten for your satiety center to kick in and register that you are full. Thus, before going back for a second helping, wait 20 minutes. If you still feel hungry, go for seconds but keep portion sizes small and go easy on the high-fat, high-calorie foods.
- **Share the wealth**: If you host a party or dinner, have Tupperware or disposable containers available for guests to take home leftovers. This will help get tempting foods out of the house entirely!
- **Bring the healthy dish:** When contributing to the party, take something low in calories and high in nutrition, such as raw vegetables and hummus, fresh fruit, or a less guilty desert (see the "Crave That? Eat This!" list of healthy alternatives).
- **Go easy on the alcohol:** Most people are well aware of the added poundage that can be brought on by birthday cake or chips and guacamole or pumpkin pie. Let's not underestimate the fact that alcohol itself is chock-full of calories (kcals). For example, a typical two ounces of alcohol (such as might be found in a typical mixed drink) contains approximately 141 kcals, and that's not including the mixer, which can easily add another 100-300 kcals! An eight-ounce glass of eggnog with rum contains 400 kcals. Beer and wine may be smarter options, with 150 kcals for a typical serving (i.e., 12 and eight ounces, respectively). And research suggests that those additional alcohol calories are stored as fat instead of used for energy. In addition, alcohol tends to distort our nutritional judgment, causing us to consume more high-calorie, high-fat foods than we would if we were not under the influence.
- **Exercise!** While it is a good idea to balance your energy intake with the appropriate amount of exercise on a regular basis, it is particularly important around holidays. Make

an effort to get out on a hike or bike ride when you have a summer event, or during the winter months hit the slopes or the gym for a strength and cardio session before you get ready to party. I like to say " burn it to earn it!"

Crave That? Eat This!

No one can deny that food is a big part of the holidays, but it is not the only part, and certainly is not the most important. So, when it comes to food, forget the all or nothing mindset. Depriving yourself of party treats or feeling guilty after eating isn't part of a healthy eating strategy. Here is a list of some foods, snacks, and dishes (all with ≤ 150 calories) that will help you keep yourself healthy and satisfied.

- **Morning Perk:** Enjoy an 8-ounce skim or soy milk latte or a hot tea with honey as your morning kick start to avoid packing un "empty calories first thing
- **Breakfast Boost:** Mix non-fat, unsweetened yogurt (plant based or dairy with 1/2 a cup of blueberries and raspberries, maybe a little raw oats and chia seeds too!
- **"Ants on a Log":** Fill 5 ribs of celery with one tablespoon of nut butter and a few raisins for your next kids birthday party
- **Caprese:** Top low-fat mozzarella cheese with tomatoes and fresh basil leaves and drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar reduction
- **Protein-Packed snack:** Wrap 2 ounces of low-sodium turkey (or tofurkey or tuna) with 1 Tbsp hummus in a collard leaf
- **Pumpkin pudding:** ½ C pumkin puree w/ ½ C yogurt and cinnamon for a fall treat
- **Sweet and Savory:** 2 oz of low-fat cottage cheese with one medium peach or tomatoes
- **Midday Munchies:** Top half a medium apple or banana with a 1 tbsp of nut butter
- **Movie Night Necessity:** Spray a tablespoon of olive oil and sprinkle sea salt over 2 cups of air-popped popcorn (no butter of course!)
- **Salty Sensations**
  - Pop Chips! 1 serving
  - 1 small bag soy crisps or baked chips (potato, tortilla, vegetable)
  - 1 oz pretzels
  - 1 cup edamame with sea salt
  - ¼ cup plain or flavored almonds or ½ cup pistachios in the shell
  - 2 light cheese wedges spread on 2 rice or nut thin style crackers
  - Half a baked potato topped with salsa and avocado or light cheese/nutritional yeast
  - Half a medium avocado, drizzled with fresh lime juice and lightly sprinkled with salt
  - 5 mini chocolate rice cakes, each covered with a thin spread of natural peanut butter
- **Sweet Tooth Satisfiers**
  - 1 frozen fruit pop or Italian ice
  - 1 pureed frozen banana "nice cream"
  - 1 cup berries, grapes, fruit salad or watermelon
  - ¼ cup Chocolate chips (yummy to keep frozen)
  - brew a cup of chamomile tea before bed (maybe add a tsp of honey) good night!