



the
Holiday
SURVIVAL
guide

*And a holiday recipes
supplement!*



Class 5

The Bermuda Triangle of Weight Loss – Holidays! (Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas)

What do the holidays mean to you?

Is it a time of reflection, relaxation, time with family, loneliness, grief, fun, managing extended family relations, gift giving, travel, food or increased stress? Do you savor and enjoy each and every moment of the holidays or do you dread and fear them each year?

Don't allow your unrealistic holiday expectations to drive you to drinking using drugs or binging on food. Research has shown that holiday stress affects women (41%) more than men (31%). And it is a myth that American suicide rates are higher at the holidays, the Center for Disease control statistics show that suicide levels actually drop to the lowest rate during the month of December and reach their peak in the fall and the spring.

Managing your expectations, and remaining detached from the outcomes, being open to non-traditional celebrations, you don't have to dread them; use these strategies to help make this time of year less stressful and more tolerable and maybe even enjoyable.

1. Don't buy into the idealized Hollywood/media images of the holidays.

- A Hallmark movie portrays the best of the best and remember they are movies and not reality.
- A commercial says he should be buying you that diamond ring this year, but chances are he isn't.
- A magazine ad shows a perfect holiday meal; every dish beautifully arranged and perfect but every dish isn't cooked to perfection and there are tensions at the dinner table between family members. Real life. Remember, don't sweat the small stuff!
- Families are often loud, rude and inconsiderate, learn to show unconditional love toward family members.

2. Be ok with your traditions and how you celebrate, even if they are new, non-traditional or unconventional.

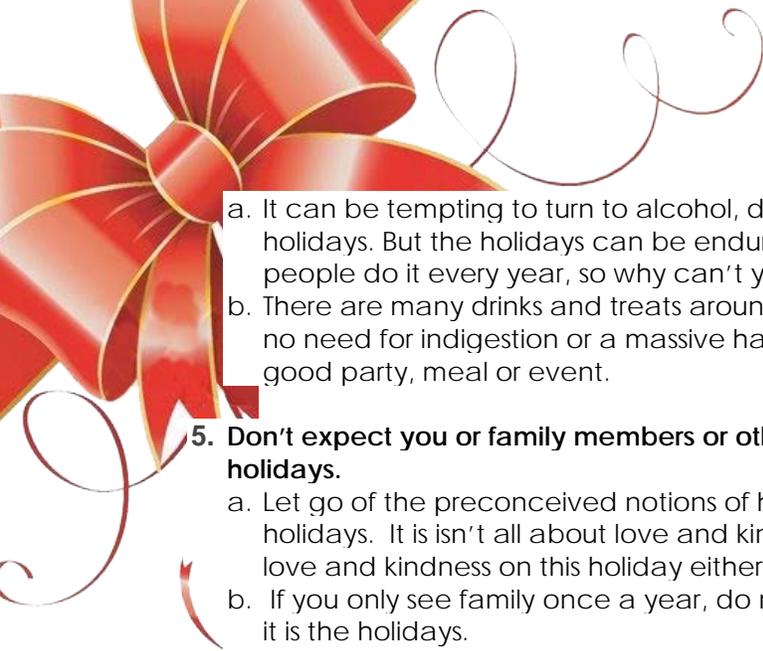
- Be proud of your individual traditions that make your holidays special.
- Don't enjoy turkey? Then have pizza or Chinese and enjoy your celebration.
- Contrary to popular belief, there are no rules for the holidays. Do what you enjoy!
- Be flexible and open-minded! Balance past traditions with newly created traditions.

3. Don't be afraid to set limits on the number of holiday events you attend.

- If it brings stress instead of joy trying to attend; maybe you should bow out.
- Go for quality not quantity of holiday celebrations. Who is most important to you? What events are most important to you?
- Ask yourself this: If a holiday celebration or tradition is causing you more stress than joy, is it really worth attending or keeping? Pick and choose those events which will enhance your holiday experience.
- Be like your four legged friends a cat nap or two is a great thing!

4. Know you can enjoy the holidays without alcohol or drugs or binging on foods.



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- a. It can be tempting to turn to alcohol, drugs or excessive foods to self-medicate during the holidays. But the holidays can be endured and even enjoyed without excess. Millions of people do it every year, so why can't you be one of them?
 - b. There are many drinks and treats around during the holidays choose your selection wisely; no need for indigestion or a massive hangover to spoil or even prevent the memory of a good party, meal or event.

5. Don't expect you or family members or other acquaintances to be different during the holidays.

- a. Let go of the preconceived notions of how everyone is supposed to behave at the holidays. It is isn't all about love and kindness the other 364 days, it isn't going to be about love and kindness on this holiday either.
- b. If you only see family once a year, do not expect them to act any differently just because it is the holidays.
- c. That hyper-critical family member who thinks you dress all wrong, won't live forever, do your best to enjoy their company and pass the potatoes with a smile.
- d. You can only control you so do it and try not to contribute to tensions/fights, etc.

6. Gain awareness of your emotional state and express gratitude

- a. Be thankful for the things in our lives that are going well
- b. We all have memories of what we used to do with mom, dad, grandparents, aunts and uncles be grateful for these memories and not to let those emotional memories of loss overwhelm you.

7. Write down your expectations for the holidays.

- a. *Just take a few minutes to think about what you're expecting. Are your ideas realistic?*
- b. Did you discover something that you know will stress you out? Do you have a plan for handling it so it will not stress you out?
- c. Stress at the holidays is often the realization of unmet expectations. Lessen your expectations and lessen your stress!

8. Living in the Moment

- a. Having no expectations
- b. Enjoying what is there now around you not waiting for something else to enjoy
- c. Find joy in every thing

The Take Away

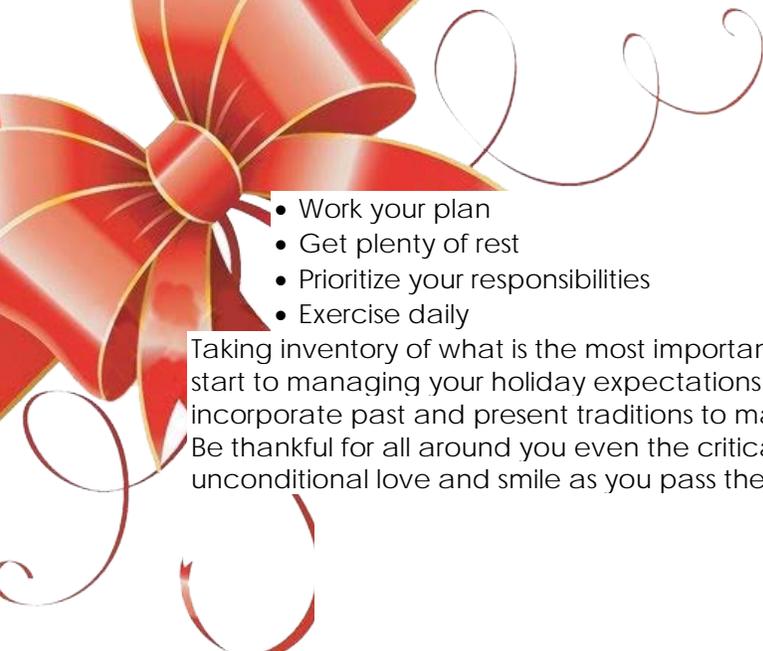
If you can do a little planning and be flexible, you can enjoy the holidays and not face the New Year with excess baggage. Do not be afraid to begin a new tradition and incorporate past and present traditions to make your own special holiday blend of memories. Be thankful for all around you even the critical relatives who will not live forever, show them unconditional love and smile as you pass the potatoes.

The holidays are about enjoying family and friends and not only about food. Focus on people and not food! Keep moving during the upcoming holiday season and celebrate in a healthy way. Enjoy everything in healthy moderation and face the New Year with a renewed sense of a commitment to greater health and a greater sense of control over food. It's all about lifestyle changes, not diets.

Don't let your efforts to live a healthier life get lost in the Bermuda Triangle of Weight Loss this year!

- Make a choice
- Make a plan



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- Work your plan
 - Get plenty of rest
 - Prioritize your responsibilities
 - Exercise daily

Taking inventory of what is the most important to you during the holidays and writing it down is a start to managing your holiday expectations. Don't be afraid to begin a new tradition and incorporate past and present traditions to make your own special holiday blend of memories. Be thankful for all around you even the critical relatives who will not live forever, show them unconditional love and smile as you pass the potatoes.

Be kind to
yourself!



Class 6

Set Your Holiday Goals and Making a Plan

This time of year brings many occasions for overeating. It is always good to set some goals and have a plan before you sit down at one of these feasts.

Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Christmas and New Year's, all conjure up visions of parties, endless buffets and extravagant desserts. We have to choose what path we are wanting to walk for the holidays and make plans on how to stay on our path.

- Do you want to **maintain** your weight?
- Do you want to continue to **lose excess** weight?
- Do you want to enjoy but are **not concerned if you gain** an extra couple of pounds?
- Do you want to totally enjoy, put weight loss goals aside and forget weight loss during the holidays?

Once you set your holiday weight goal, it is time to plan your strategies for accomplishing your goals. Below are some tips for maintaining your current weight, losing a little weight during the holidays and trips to keep the holidays light and enjoyable and be able to begin the New Year with your sanity intact.

Why would someone choose to put their weight loss goals aside and "forget weight loss" during the holidays?

- **Lack of planning.** Being successful in times of food temptations requires pre-planning. "Winging it" at a dinner party usually will not yield great results.
- **The desire to eat is greater than the desire to be healthier.** You must want to and no one can make you do anything you do not really desire to do.
- **Many are too tired/overwhelmed/stressed out.** With so many activities going on, I think we often over commit ourselves and when we are tired and overwhelmed were not able to make the best healthy choices. Even the simple tasks seem difficult at these stressful times. During the holidays simplify your life as much as you can. That is a tall order but prioritize your responsibilities, your body will love you for it!
 - Try going to bed 30 minutes earlier
 - making a list of things to do but assign a priority of "one" to things that HAVE to be done in the next 24 hours (e.g., a bill is due, a performance must be attended, an appointment)
 - assign a "two" to the things that can be done in a couple of days (e.g., getting groceries, doing laundry, filling up the car with gas)
 - Assign a "three" to things that aren't really necessary but 'nice' (e.g., picking up an extra gift, decorating the guest room, etc.).
 - To help manage stress, do not let your workout plans fall by the wayside.
 - Make exercise a daily priority. Take a brisk walk around the mall before you begin your shopping. Try to move daily!
 - Park your car as far as you can from the store, walk a few extra steps.
 - When doing housework, turn on your favorite music and dance as you dust and vacuum though the house.
 - Do squats as you are picking up toys, clothes from off the floor.
 - Lunge to the laundry room.
 - Run up the stairs.
 - Skip to the mail box.



Do not want to go that route?

Try these tips if you want to try to maintain your healthy focus during the holidays.

- **Find your reasons.** Try writing down all the reasons why you want to be healthier and keep this list handy. When the holiday temptation comes, pull out that list and read it. Do your reasons still apply? If yes, step away from the fruit cake! If not, it is time to explore what has changed and write down what are the reasons that are now valid. Again, keep the list and pull it out when you are feeling the need to speed feed! (E.g. overeat, binge)
- **Make a Holiday Party Plan.** Planning is the key to success for the holiday season. Create a plan. Stick with your plan as much as humanly possible. This time of year marks the start of the wave of parties, meals and other events that we have come to cherish. **While parties are great and large family meals are delicious, we have to keep focus on what is really important through this season.**
 - **Know what you are going to eat before you arrive.**
 - **Know how you are going to react to the temptations of the season.** Visualize yourself in situations and walk through various scenarios and prepare your mind for what you will be facing food wise.
- **Keep sugary food intake to a minimum.** Sugar tends to make you want more sugar so eat sugared foods sparingly. Take only a half a serving instead of a full serving and savor it!
- **Remember you can say “no” when you are offered something to eat or drink that you know isn’t a good choice.** Be assertive and be your own advocate!
- **Choose to drink extra water to flush out the rich calorie laden foods of the holidays!** Alcohol can leave you feeling dehydrated, chase that alcoholic drink with a big glass of water! Alcohol and its effects can encourage you to over-indulge and most drinks are full of calories and sugar. Eat your calories, don’t drink them!
- **Get your daily eight hours of rest.** Being tired does affect your eating! A lack of rest can easily derail your weight loss plans and plunge you into a downward spiral of making poor food choices and avoiding the gym!
- **Family and friends are important and so is our health.** The average American consumes as many as 4,500 calories at Thanksgiving dinner alone! OUCH! The average American also manages to gain one to two pounds during the holidays which often become “permanent” after the holidays are over.
- **You might need to lighten up your expectations.** Experts suggest that around the middle of November switch your focus from losing weight to maintain and allow yourself a few treats and then begin with renewed fervor at the New Year focusing on weight loss.
- **Thanksgiving and Christmas is one meal, not the Last Supper!**
- **Make holiday memories not holiday bulges!**
- **Create non-food projects to do with your children or grandchildren** such as; playing games, making ornaments, a walking tour of the holiday lights or make wreaths.
- **Start traditions of service.** Prepare a care package for a needy family, volunteer to serve meals at a community center, find ways to help someone else have a good holiday that might not have family.

The Take Away

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Class 7

HOLIDAY SURVIVAL STRATEGIES AND TIPS

Useful tips that can help you get through the holidays without expanding your waist size whether you are attending a big party, a family gathering or just a few friends.

- **Offer to bring something.** If the host/hostess is open to others bringing dishes opt to bring something you know is a “safe” food for you. Prepare a healthy dish that you know you can comfortably eat and is something others would enjoy as well. Others will be happy to share and enjoy your dish too.
- **Plan your holiday menus.** Be sure to include lots of vegetables, lean meats, seafood, whole grains and lower fat or fat-free dairy.
- **Appetizers.** Make light appetizers instead of deep-fried batter encrusted items. Such as; fresh fruit platters, meat wrapped veggies, whole grain crackers, with reduced fat cheeses, vegetables with light yogurt dips, shrimp cocktails and fruit kabobs. Or Skip the appetizers. Those tiny quiches pack a powerful amount of fat and calories as do those tiny meatballs and cheese cubes! Opt for fresh veggies and skip the dip!
- **Trim the trimmings!** Modify holiday favorites by using a little less nuts, cream sauces, cheese, butter, gravy and whipped cream. Use less of the trimmings if you aren't cooking a little less here and there adds up to big savings! Leave your holiday meals feeling satisfied and not stuffed like the Tom Turkey!
- **Gravy.** Make gravy early as possible and chill in the fridge and then skim off the extra hardened fat. This will also eliminate a lot of saturated fat and save a whopping 56 gm of fat per cup.
- **Dressing.** Use a little less bread and add more onions, garlic, celery, and vegetables. Add fruits such as cranberries or apples. Moisten or flavor with low fat low sodium chicken or vegetable broth or applesauce instead of butter.
- **Turkey.** Enjoy delicious, roasted turkey breast without the skin and save 11 grams of saturated fat per 3 oz. serving. Enjoy that delicious roasted turkey without the skin and eliminate saturated fat.
- **Green Bean Casserole.** Cook fresh green beans with chunks of potatoes instead of cream soup. Top with toasted slivered almonds instead of fried onion rings.
- **Mashed Potatoes.** Use skim milk, chicken broth, garlic or garlic powder, and Parmesan cheese instead of whole milk and butter. Skinny down those mashed potatoes even more by incorporating mashed cauliflower into your potatoes! Skinny them down even more by using fat-free chicken broth or fat free sour cream instead of whole milk and butter.
- **Quick Holiday Nog.** Four bananas, 1-1/2 cups skim milk or soymilk, 1-1/2 cups plain nonfat yogurt, 1/4 teaspoon rum extract, and ground nutmeg. Blend all ingredients except nutmeg. Puree until smooth. Top with nutmeg.
- **Crustless Pumpkin Pie.** Eliminate the crust on your pumpkin pie and cut the calories!
- **Substitute egg whites (2)** for a whole egg in recipes.
- **Replace heavy cream** with evaporated skim milk in cheesecakes and cream pies.
- **Top cakes with fresh fruit, fruit sauce, or a sprinkle of powdered sugar instead of fattening frosting.** This will trim down the amount of calories and fat consumed at a holiday dessert table.
- **Do not go to a dinner or holiday party hungry.** Have some veggies or fruit before you go. Arriving hungry is sure to feed the flame of grabbing a bite of this and a bite of that. Those



bites and nibbles add up! Before attending that amazing holiday feast, try munching on raw veggies or eating a piece of fruit before your arrival and to make it a goal to not arrive feeling famished which will set you up to over-indulge. Do not skip a meal and arrive ravenous! One of the worse things you can do is to skip meals to indulge later!

- **Don't Skip Breakfast or meals!** So many people run out the door before eating a good breakfast. Likewise, misinformed people who are trying to lose weight will sometimes skip meals. Breakfast is definitely not the meal to skip, as it gives you a much-needed metabolism boost to keep you going until your next meal.
- **Eat Small Meals throughout the Day** - One of the best ways to not feel hungry is by constantly eating! Yes, this can actually help you lose weight. By eating smaller meals throughout the day instead of a few large meals, your metabolism stays high and your stomach always has a little food in it. Try six meals a day instead of three.
- **Use a smaller plate. Eat smaller portions.** A smaller plate holds smaller portions. Fill it once and then move as far as you can from the food and look over the buffet table before adding any food to your plate. **Use a smaller plate.** A small plate holds smaller portions. Fill it once and then move as far as you can from the food. Experts suggest only placing two items on your plate at a time. Variety stimulates appetite so limit the variety on your plate at any time. Eat your two items and return to the buffet for the next two items.
- **Move away from the food.** Keep your distance from the food so that you aren't tempted to reach into that bowl of mixed nuts or bag of chips.
- **Spend time visiting with friends and enjoying the company.** Life is about family and friends and not the food! Enjoy the company around you and focus on conversations and not the food. Keeping the holiday celebrations centered on family, friends and fun. Give yourself the best gift you can give yourself, the ability to say "no" to too much food, too much drink and situations which you do not enjoy!
- **Eat only until you feel satisfied.** Do not eat until you feel stuffed.
- **Be a food "snob" and choose wisely.** Be very selective about what you put on your plate. Eat what nourishes your body not your "emotional comfort zone." Avoid, excess sauces, creams, gravies, butters and excess sugars. Opt for "naked" veggies, fruits and lean proteins. Select only your most favorite dishes and avoid any that you feel are just so-so. Chew, chew chew. Savor the flavors.
- **Eat foods that are good for you first.** Try filling up on naked vegetable dishes before tackling the stuffing, gravy, mashed potatoes and sweet potato casserole. If you really need a snack, you should eat one that is guilt-free and that won't contribute to more hunger. Non-starchy vegetables are "free foods" that you can eat all day without gaining weight. They also stick to your ribs longer than other snacks.
- **Balance any rich high calorie selections with extra vegetables** and fruits which are simply prepared without heavy sauces or cream. Avoid, excess sauces, creams, gravies, butters and excess sugars. Opt for "naked" veggies, fruits and lean proteins.
- **Sit down, relax and chew your food.** Savor the flavors of the season and you're your brain time (about 20 minutes) to know you have had enough food.
 - **Put Your Fork Down Between Every Bite** - This is a great way to make yourself slow down while eating and it also sends signals to your brain that you are through eating each time you put the fork down.
 - **Take a sip of water between bites.** This is one of the most essential ways to stay healthy and stick to your healthier eating plan. Not only does drinking water flush toxins from your body, it keeps you energized and makes your stomach feel full. Do not force too much water down, as that will make you feel sick. However, drinking eight glasses a day plus one before each meal will stem your hunger.



- **Eat Slower** - Often times, we will eat until we are “stuffed.” You don’t want to go that far before you stop eating, which is why you should slow down when you eat. You may be surprised at how much less you will have to eat before your body feels satisfied.
- **If you know you will be having a large meal or had a large meal, go smaller on the next meal.** Remember it takes an extra five hundred calories a day for seven days to gain one pound. One slice of pumpkin pie or cake will not derail your entire week!
- **Be proactive and keep weighing yourself during the holidays.** Any weight gain you see, stop it and do not let it creep further up!
- **Take a Nap.** Cannot stop thinking about how hungry you are? Take a little nap and you will probably wake up feeling more energized and more satisfied. Most people don’t feel hungry first thing in the morning and that is because there is less acid in your stomach. A nap can recreate this feeling.
- **Reduce Your Carb Intake** - Carbohydrates turn to sugar and stimulate your body’s insulin, thus causing a vicious cycle of hunger. Remember, food is supposed to satiate your hunger, not increase it! Reduce your carb intake to gain control over your constant hunger.
- **Increase your Lean Protein** - Protein stays in your body longer than carbohydrates, so choose a lean piece of meat over a low-fat bagel. There is a reason why people were dropping serious pounds on the Atkin’s Diet. While that is an extreme diet, you can sensibly increase your lean protein intake and minimize your hunger between meals. You can consume eggs, beans, and nuts (be careful nuts are high calorie).
- **Eat More Eggs** - Looking for a low-fat, high-protein snack to stem your hunger? Eggs will give you that in spades. If cholesterol is a concern for you, skip the egg yolks and make yourself an egg white snack.
- **Increase Your Fiber Intake** - Bulky, high-fiber foods usually fill your stomach quickly and keep you satisfied for a long time. They also require quite a bit of chewing, which psychologically triggers the feeling of satisfaction.
- **Brush Your Teeth and Tongue** - How great does a minty, clean mouth feel? Probably good enough to make you think twice before you eat something directly after a good tooth and tongue brushing. This is a method used by many dieters.
- **Initiate activity.** If you are at a casual gathering, start that game of touch football. Ask friends or relatives to go for a walk after dinner. Make it a tradition! Just a short 10-15 walk can help relieve the stress of the holidays and help offset over-indulgences. Play with Fido after dinner, dogs love to go for walks and play fetch. A nice long walk or jog is certain to boost your adrenaline and kill your hunger for a while, at least. Burning more calories will make your body hungry. However, most people are not hungry directly after exercising, so this can be a great way to pass the time between meals instead of eating.
- **Don’t skip your workouts!** If you can’t do an hour workout, do it in smaller 10 or 15 minute segments during your day. Believe it is enough and it will be!
- **Drink Vinegar.** A fad diet that has come and gone involved drinking two teaspoons of apple cider vinegar before each meal. While it was proven that vinegar does not directly cause weight loss, some people feel less hungry after drinking it because it’s so unappealing.
- **Avoid Salt.** Excessive amounts of salt is never good for your body and can definitely lead to dehydration. Since many people can’t recognize the difference between hunger and thirst, eating salt could make you feel as if you are hungry when you really aren’t.
- **Avoid Sugar.** Foods that are high in sugar may taste delicious, but they burn through your body too quickly. Even sugary snacks that are low in fat are a bad idea, as you will just get hungry soon again and require more food.



- **Stay Busy.** Many people convince themselves that they are hungry when they are actually just bored. If you find yourself eating because there is nothing else to do, put yourself to work. Keep your mind off food.
- **Avoid Alcohol.** Not only is alcohol filled with empty calories, it can greatly increase your appetite. It is hard to tell when your body is full after you become a bit tipsy. Alcohol also relaxes that willpower of yours, which makes you even more likely to go for a second helping.
- **Avoid Caffeine.** Although some people use caffeine as an appetite suppressant, you will just quickly crash after the caffeine burns through your body. This is similar to how sugar makes you hungrier than before. You really don't need anything to drink other than water while trying to lose weight.
- **Chew Ice.** Chewing will trick your body into thinking it is eating and water makes your stomach feel fuller. Therefore, chewing ice covers both diet tricks at once! Mind you, chewing ice isn't good for sensitive teeth or those with braces.
- **Suck on a Peppermint.** Many physical and psychological benefits have been attributed to peppermint over the years. Although it hasn't been proven by scientists, some dieters swear that sucking on a peppermint makes their body feel full when they are a bit hungry.
- **Chew Gum.** Sugarless gum is a guilt-free way to keep your jaws busy. Many people attest that chewing gum can help you lose weight and make you feel as if you are eating food. Other benefits, such as building stronger jaw muscles and increasing concentration, are also associated with chewing gum.
- **Learn to Manage Stress.** Mind-over-body diet tricks are hard to control if you aren't thinking with a straight head. Therefore, you should do your best to manage your stress level. Stress will not only make you want to eat, it is a leading cause of overeating.
- **Suck in Your Gut.** Your body experiences hunger when the stomach is empty. By tightening your abdominal muscles (also known as "sucking in your gut"), you will compress your stomach and temporarily mask hunger pangs. It is recommended that you always keep your stomach muscles tightened anyway, as it helps you to get your abs into shape.
- **Wear Snug Clothes.** What a simple thing to do to remind ourselves to not over indulge! Wear those tighter jeans and skip the seconds!
- **Keep your dominate hand busy!** Hold your beverage in your dominate hand so that it is not as easy to reach for those noshes!
- **Keep track of what you eat.** Maintain your food journal and remind yourself of your goals during this season of temptations.
- **Cut your beverage calories in Half.** Alternate calorie laden (sugar and alcoholic) beverages with sparkling water to half the number of calories you are drinking.
- **Before you splurge at Work.** Do something healthy before you splurge, take a short walk, eat something healthy or climb a couple flights of stairs. Delaying the splurge is a good tactic too!
- **Sit next to a healthy eater.** This is simple. Good examples can help us stay on track!
- **Be Flexible and Realistic.** This time of year can hold many surprises good and bad, don't be so rigid that one poor choices sends your mind into a tailspin. Cut out an afternoon snack or switch for something not as good for something a little less calorie laden. If nothing else, be happy to maintain your weight during the holiday season!

The Take Away

If you can do a little planning and be flexible, you can enjoy the holidays and not face the New Year with excess baggage. Do not be afraid to begin a new tradition and incorporate past and present traditions to make your own special holiday blend of memories. Be thankful for all around you even the critical relatives who will not live forever, show them unconditional love and smile as you pass the potatoes.





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“Talk Nice”
...to yourself



why being nice to yourself can be *empowering*



Class 8

The Combat Zone: Food Pushers and Food Cops



Does any of this sound even vaguely familiar?

- "I made this just for you"
- "Go ahead, it is the holidays it will not hurt you!"
- "Don't you want to enjoy the season?"
- "You never eat anything anymore, are you sick?"
- "What's wrong with you? Are you anorexic!?"
- "Oh come on, it will not hurt you to have a bite!"
- "Your grandmother made this for you, do you really want to hurt her feelings?"

What is a food pusher/food badger?

Think of it as you would a drug dealer but with food and often a well-meaning family or friend who is trying to get you to eat this or that you really do not want to eat!

What is a food cop? Someone who might be envious of your health goals and process and think they "owe" it to you to keep you on track!

Dealing and Coping with Good Intentions during the Holiday Season

Do you eat to please others? Eating to please others can lead down a bad path to obesity. The holidays is where we feel compelled to eat to please others. Do not let the Food pushers no matter if they are well-meaning or out and out diet saboteurs derail your health goals! Regardless of their motivation, it is important for you to stick to your goals/motivations. Remember you control what goes into your mouth and onto your plate! These tips and suggestions works all throughout the year and not just as the holiday season. Even if "those" people during the holiday that feel you should abandon your health goals and indulge freely. Remember this one basic fact, if you do not take your health goals seriously, neither will anyone else! Food Pushers will try guilt, they try shame, they try coercion, face it they will try anything! But remember to focus on the intent of the person and not their action. This will help you to respond in a more thoughtful way. Reflect on how you feel and communicate this in a non-blaming way. Redirect the person with either a "What would really help me is if you would go for a walk with me after dinner." Or "If you could cut up some fruit for me next that, that would be a treat I would like."



Choosing how to Deal with Food Pushers (Honesty vs Dishonesty)

It has always been said that “honesty” is the best policy and if you choose to be honest, tread lightly.

Often you can say I am choosing not to eat that because I have had a really bad heartburn, acid reflux, indigestion, blood sugar issues, etc. and that you are following your doctor’s advice will be take care of the situation. This will enable your family/friends to take what you are doing far more seriously than if you just said I am trying to watch my weight. If you say you are trying to watch your weight, it might imply to the other person that they are not trying to watch theirs and you could end up with an unplanned confrontation. Health reasons are far easier for people to respect and understand. Keep it simple.

Rehearsing your response in advance often helps you to come across more sincere and you will not feel the pressure or panic and using humor to defuse the situation is another good tool to use too!

The Pusher: “You are so skinny! Take more. You do not eat enough!”

You: Hold up your fist and say “Did you know this is the actual size of your stomach? It is amazing to think about how much we try to put in there!”

The Pusher: “You sure can put it away, can’t you? Girls do not normally eat that much!”

You: “Eating like a bird went out if petticoats, hoop skirts and corsets! I am planning on running/jogging (fill in the blank with whatever activity you do) after I leave here!”

The Pusher: “But I made this just for you!”

You: Your reply can be as simple as “No thanks” but make sure it is said with force and conviction. It is suggested that you do not forget to be extra generous with the compliments.

The Pusher: “It is a holiday, you can let lose for a day can’t you?”

You: Respond by telling them something really fun that you have done or enjoyed that is not focused around food. For example, “Can you believe I made snow angels, was in a snowball fight today for the first time in years!?”

The Pusher: “You are so obsessed with losing weight! Come on take a break!”

You: “Thank you for noticing all the changes I have been making! It has not been easy but I am determined to get healthier. Thank you for being supportive, it really means a lot!”

The Food Cop: “Should you really be eating that?”

You: Turn the question around. “Wow, you seem really worried about what other people eat.” It might make for a few uncomfortable moments but it will make the point they crossed a line and very likely it will not happen again!

Telling those “Little White Lies” (The Dishonesty Approach)

When you hear a “food pusher” or a “food cop” first think about their motivation. Is it coming out of a genuine love and concern for you? Usually this is the case and you should remember that when deciding on how to reply to their tactics.



Honesty is always the best policy but some choose to “embellish” the truth a bit to avoid hurt feelings but often that will backfire on you, big time!

This one can get you into a lot of trouble! Some choose to “embellish” the truth and this can get you into a very deep pit of quicksand very quickly! Some choose this route thinking they are being “nice” or “polite” and in reality they are damaging their own character. Getting out of that pit you have created by being “nice” ends up being more difficult than you imagined and causes more damage than is necessary. Think about these responses if they are not 100% truthful! How will the person respond if they know you are not being honest? Do you think their first thought will be “oh they love me so much and do not want to hurt my feelings?” Probably not, their thought is more likely to be “they do not care for me at all they feel they have to lie to me and cannot be honest.” Guess what? They will probably not trust you any more when you give them a compliment either.

- “I’m on medication and can’t drink right now.” Careful with this one – it might invite nosy questions about your made-up medical condition.
- “Looks delicious, but I’m allergic.” No reason to tell anyone that you are allergic to tight clothes and feeling bloated! But again could cause a myriad of questions that could lead to a confrontation!

If you do have a health condition, or are just wanting to lose a few pounds, that is purely your own personal business and do not feel you have to explain it to anyone. Explaining things will open you up to more potential questions or an angry confrontation. If you want to share and there is a genuine healthy problem that is your choice but do not feel badgered or pushed into sharing information that you would rather keep private. The holidays you are the one who should be in control of what you are eating not a food pusher, a food badger, a food cop or some overbearing family member or friend. Enjoy the holidays and keep your self-respect and continue to be able to wear those skinny jeans!

Other Tactics to use with Food Pushers

Think very small.

If you are going to partake in many of those high fat high calorie foods take a small portion. It will please the chef and keep you from overeating.

Stall Tactics

If food comes your way and you are already full, “Maybe I will have some in a bit.” “I am too stuffed to eat right now but maybe later.” Stalling can often be easier than just turning down the food altogether. And you do have the option if you want more to eat later, you can do it!

Doggie Bag or Not

If it is something you really do like but do not need/want more of it at the time, ask them to wrap it up for you to take home to eat later. That way, you can eat it when you are ready to eat it and not feel pressure to eat it right then and maybe overeat! Or if it is something you would rather not have in your house, you can tell the cook how



awesome their cooking is and suggest they keep the leftovers to enjoy getting a break from all the cooking they had to do too. Chances are, they will be happy to keep the leftovers.

Long Term “Shaping”

This will take a lot longer to accomplish but can be effective and good for you and the host as well! Try lavishing compliments on the types of dishes you feel you can enjoy without compromise, such as fresh fruits, salads and maybe even seafood/fish dishes. Over time, the host will make certain you have those dishes which you truly love just for you! Lavish compliments over those dishes (sincere compliments) but be careful to not force your dislikes and opinions on the host or other guests. Everyone has their own strongly held views. Yes, even food has been politicized these days!

Just say no

Nancy Reagan said it about drugs, so why not food? If you have tried everything and nothing has worked just firmly and politely say “no.” If your health is your top priority ruffling a few temporary feathers is worth being able to put your health first. Often if you give an excuse or a reason, you open yourself up to an argument or confrontation. After saying “no thank you,” change the subject and move the conversation to another topic.

The Take Away

One thing to remember during the holidays or anytime of the year, it is ok to have treats in moderation! Do not ever deprive yourself of your favorite holiday foods but do not let anyone coerce you into overeating them! You never have to eat what you do not want to eat and you never ever have to justify your decision for not eating something! You are in charge of your healthy goals and other family members, friends or co-workers might not be aware of your goals so be in charge of your splurges/indulgences!

“If YOU don’t think your goals are important, NO ONE else is going to think they’re important either”



Appendix A: Healthier Holiday Side Dish Recipes

Several have requested recipes and I have found a few that sound great for the holidays! I haven't tried these exact recipes but I am ready to start cooking!

Healthy Potato Gratin with Herbs – 3pp or 3sp per serving

Serves 8 - From www.foodandwine.com

Total time 2 hours

Ingredients

1 ½ T Extra Virgin Olive Oil (plus more for the cake pan)

1 large shallot, minced (about 1/3 cup)

1 ½ t. chopped thyme

½ t. rosemary

2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

2 pounds medium red potatoes, very thinly sliced

Salt

Freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and oil an 8-inch round cake pan, preferably of dark metal. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and oil the paper.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat the 1 ½ T of olive oil. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the thyme and rosemary and cook for 1 minute. Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Cook over moderately high heat until reduced to ¾ cup, about 10 minutes.
3. Arrange an overlapping layer of potato slices in the cake pan. Season light with salt and pepper and spoon a small amount of the broth on top. Repeat the layering with remaining potatoes and reduced broth, seasoning each layer lightly. Pour any remaining broth on top. Cover the pan with a sheet of oiled parchment paper and then a sheet of foil.
4. Bake the gratin in the center of the oven until the potatoes are very tender, about 1 hour. Remove the foil and paper and bake until the top is dry, about 10 minutes longer.
5. Turn the broiler on. Remove the gratin from the oven and let rest for 5 minutes. Invert the gratin onto a heatproof plate. Carefully remove the parchment round. Broil the gratin 6 inches from the heat until the surface is lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Cut into 8 wedges and serve.

Caramelized Brussels Sprouts with Pancetta-3pp or 4sp per serving

Serves 10 – from www.foodandwine.com

Total time 1 hour

Ingredients

3 pounds Brussels sprouts

6 T extra virgin olive oil (I suspect you could do this with less oil)

6 shallots, thinly sliced (1 ½ cups)

2 ounces thickly sliced pancetta, cut into ¼ inch dice

Kosher salt

¼ c. oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped

1. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the Brussels sprouts until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Cut the Brussels sprouts in half lengthwise.
2. In a large deep skillet, heat 2 T. of the oil. Add the shallots and cook over moderately low heat, stirring, until lightly browned, 10 minutes; scrape into a bowl.



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3. Add the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the oil to the skillet. Add the Brussel sprouts, cut side down, and the pancetta. Season with salt and cook over high heat, stirring occasional, until the sprouts are browned and tender, about 10 minutes. Add the sun-dried tomatoes and shallots and cook, stirring, until warm, about 5 minutes. Season with salt, transfer to a bowl and serve.

Chunky Cranberry Sauce- 1pp or 1sp per $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving

Serves 16+ - original recipe from www.foodandwine.com

Total time 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound cranberries
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened apple juice
- 1 c. stevia in the raw (or other sugar substitute)

1. In a large saucepan combine the cranberries with the apple juice and sugar. Simmer over low heat until the berries burst and the sauce is jam-like, about 20 minutes. Transfer the sauce to a heatproof bowl, let cool, then refrigerate until chilled.
2. Sauce can be refrigerated for up to one month.

Honey Glazed Sweet Potatoes – 4pp or 5sp per serving

From: www.mayoclinic.org

Serves 8

Total time 1 hour 30 minutes

Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- 2 T brown sugar
- 2T. Honey
- 1 T. olive oil
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes (about 4 large), peeled and cut into wedges
- Cracked black pepper or chopped herb of choice (rosemary, sage or thyme) to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Lightly coat a 9x13 inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. To make the sauce, in a small bowl add the water, brown sugar, honey and olive oil. Whisk until smooth.
3. Place a single layer of sweet potatoes in the baking dish. Pour the sauce over the sweet potatoes. Turn to coat them.
4. Cover and bake until tender, about 45 minutes. Turn the sweet potatoes once or twice to continue coating them. When tender, remove the cover and continue to bake until the glaze is set, about 15 minutes.

Apple Corn Muffins – 3pp or 4sp per muffin

From: www.mayoclinic.org

Makes 12 muffins

Total time: 50 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 c. all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup yellow corn meal
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. packed brown sugar
- 1 T. baking powder



¼ t. salt
 ¾ c. fat-free milk
 2 egg whites
 1 apple, peeled and coarsely chopped
 ½ c. Corn kernels

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a 12-cup muffin with paper or foil liners.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, cornmeal, brown sugar, baking powder and salt. Stir to blend evenly.
3. In a separate bowl, combine milk and egg whites. Add chopped apple and corn kernels. Whisk to mix evenly and pour over the flour mixture. Stir gently until the dry ingredients are slightly moist. The batter will be lumpy.
4. Fill prepared muffin cups 2/3 full and baked for 30 minutes. Tops of muffins should spring back when they are baked.

Mashed "Potatoes" with Chives- 4 sp per serving *(from weightwatchers.com)*

Serves 4

Total time: 25 minutes

Surprise, surprise: Cauliflower replaces nearly all the usual butter in these calorie-friendly mashed spuds.

Ingredients

- 8 oz. uncooked cauliflower, florets
- 3 small uncooked Yukon gold potatoes, peeled, cut into 1-inch chunks (about 10 oz.)
- 2 cloves, medium garlic, peeled
- 1 tsp. table salt, divided
- ¼ cup(s) low-fat milk
- 2 tsp. salted butter
- ⅓ tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsps. chives, fresh, snipped

Instructions

1. Place cauliflower, potatoes, garlic and 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a medium saucepan. Add enough water to cover ingredients and bring to a boil. Boil until vegetables are tender, about 10 to 15 minutes; drain and return to saucepan.
2. Stir in milk, butter, remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt and pepper; mash with a potato masher until smooth. Stir in chives and serve. Yields about 1/2 cup per serving. Serves 4.

Garlic Mashed Cauliflower – (from eatingwell.com) 2 sp per serving

Serves 6

Recipe By: Carolyn Casner

"Whir cauliflower into a creamy low-carb substitute for mashed potatoes. This easy recipe gets a kick of flavor from garlic-infused olive oil, making it a dairy-free (and vegan) vegetable side dish."

Ingredients

- o 8 cups cauliflower florets (about 1 large head)



- o 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for garnish
- o 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- o ¾ teaspoon salt
- o ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- o 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage

Directions

1. Bring 1 to 2 inches of water to a boil in a large saucepan fitted with a steamer basket. Add cauliflower; cover and cook until very tender, 10 to 12 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and add garlic. Cook, stirring, until the garlic starts to brown around the edges, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Remove from heat. Transfer to a food processor along with the steamed cauliflower, salt and pepper. Process until very smooth. Transfer to a bowl and stir in sage. Drizzle with oil, if desired.

Sweet Potato and Squash Bake – 2 sp per serving

Roasted root vegetables are a wonderful Passover side dish. Try some instead of, or in addition to, your usual potato kugel (casserole).

Ingredients

- 1 spray(s) cooking spray
- ½ pound uncooked sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 pounds uncooked acorn squash, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tsp. canola oil
- 1 Tbsp. unpacked brown sugar
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat an 8-inch square pan with cooking spray.
2. Place sweet potatoes and squash in prepared pan. Drizzle with oil and sprinkle with sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg; toss to coat mixture well.
3. Bake, covered with aluminum foil, for 35 minutes, stirring occasionally. Yields about 1/2 cup per serving. Serves 6.



Other Healthy Holiday Recipe Resources

Desserts

<http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/22362/holidays-occasions/christmas/special-diets/low-calorie/desserts/slideshow/low-calorie-holiday-dessert-recipes/?recipeld=249523>

Dinner

<http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/22363/holidays-occasions/christmas/special-diets/low-calorie/dinner/slideshow/low-calorie-holiday-dinner-recipes-that-wont-pack-pounds/>

Love begins with the way you treat your body and soul. Are you treating, and feeding, yourself with love?

