

OVEREATING — A USER'S GUIDE

By Becky Moran

Every year we write an article that aims to arm you with an arsenal of tools and tips to make your holiday season happy AND healthy. Like most holidays throughout the year, the fall and winter holidays are primarily celebrated with food. It always seems that the colder weather often brings out the calorically dense foods intended to put some “meat” (read: fat) on your bones to keep you warm. As the advanced beings we are, we know that there have been amazing advances in the world of micro-fleece that don't come with the same health risks as double glazed pot roast and an extra scoop of mashed potatoes. This brings us to our first of three simple tips:

1. Portion Sizes & Diversity

There is something to be said for “all things in moderation.” If someone told me that the only way for me to not gain weight over Thanksgiving was to pass on Mommom's stuffing, I'd laugh at them and then go on enjoying my stuffing while they deprive themselves. The key to enjoying not-so-healthy holiday staples is to take smaller portions. It is often said that a bite or two of dessert is enough to satisfy a craving, and I find the same to be true for stuffing and cheddar-garlic mashed potatoes? When the turkey comes out, remember that meat has portion sizes too! A single serving of meat is typically 3oz, or roughly the size of a deck of cards. To fill all of the extra white space on your dinner plate (America's are notoriously large), make colorful choices! Fill almost half with some salad (in a nice light dressing) to balance out your small portions of those heavy sides! Color equals nutrition, so mix it up and get those vitamins in.

2. Take Your Time

The Holidays are a time to enjoy the company of those most dear to you. As you gather around the table, often the only words said are those of gratitude before everyone loses themselves in their plates. I can understand trying to avoid a row between Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Velma about the next presidential election, but conversation is a great tool for slowing down during dinner. Try to take your time while you eat. It takes roughly 20 minutes for your brain to receive the message from your stomach that you are full, so if you are rushing through your meal you may just blow

past that stop sign! Eat slowly and deliberately and you may not need that second trip to the buffet table. Besides, family and friends are important. Show them how much by choosing their company over the mashed yams.

3. Get Moving!

Shortly after the meal, pull your favorite person or people away and take a walk around the neighborhood. Research shows that a short walk (just 15-20 minutes!) aids in digestion and also improves blood sugar levels. So instead of passing out in front of the football game as you have every other year, start a new tradition of a group walk between dinner and dessert! Involving others can make the experience more fun, or it can be great to take a few moments to collect yourself if your holidays are a little taxing. No matter how you walk, just do it. We all need to move more and after a big meal is the perfect time to start.

Now was that so bad? The key with holiday eating is just to not go overboard! If it weren't Thanksgiving would you still be ok with the amount of stuffing you just put on your plate? The food eaten on holidays is already special; portions don't have to have special treatment as well! Slow down and enjoy your dinner and your loved ones. Create memories outside of how good the cranberry sauce tasted this year. By taking care of yourself this holiday season, you are ensuring that you will have many more holidays to enjoy with friends and family down the line.



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Becky Moran
is a Graphic Designer
and Generally Happy Person