

The holidays may not be a good time for weight loss and in fact, most people gain some weight during the holidays. It is unclear as to how much the average weight gain during the holidays really is but there have been claims that the average weight gain is approximately 5 pounds. Most studies show that the average person gains 1 to 2 pounds in weight between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Although 1 to 2 pounds does not seem to be all that much, it is these small increases that tend to accumulate into something we later can't burn off.

How can you make sure you don't gain weight during the holidays? Act sensibly! You can enjoy all holiday feasts but don't go overboard. Make sure you exercise daily- just 30 minutes, stay active, and avoid overeating. When the holidays are over, your weight gain will be well below the average.

With the holidays coming, your children are dismissed from school for the holiday break. How do you keep your children active and avoid weight gain? Be a great role model. Make sure they are active and be sure to provide healthy, nutritious snacks for them.

Great snacks to munch on to keep the body moving can be easily made using ingredients found in your regular grocery store. Some ideas are fresh veggies, snack-sized boxes of raisins, pretzels, low-fat yogurt, crackers (graham, animal, or saltines), bagels, fig bars, fruit juice boxes (100% pure fruit juice), and fresh fruits. Always be sure there is plenty of fresh drinking water available.

10 tips for making healthy foods more fun for children!

Smoothie creations- blend fat-free or low-fat yogurt or milk with fruit pieces and crushed ice. Use fresh, frozen, canned, and even overripe fruits. Try bananas, berries, peaches, or pineapple. If you freeze the fruit first, you can even skip the ice.

Delicious dippers- Whip up a quick dip for veggies with yogurt and seasonings such as herbs or garlic. Serve with raw vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, or cauliflower. Fruit chunks go great with a yogurt and cinnamon or vanilla dip.

Caterpillar kabobs- Assemble chunks of melon, apple, orange, and pear on skewers for a fruity kabob. For a raw veggie version, use vegetables like zucchini, cucumber, squash, sweet peppers, or tomatoes.

Personalized pizzas- Let your child make his/her own using whole-wheat English muffins, bagels, or pita bread as the crust. Have tomato sauce, low-fat cheese, and cut-up veggies or fruits for toppings. Pop into the oven to warm.

Fruity peanut butterfly- Start with carrot sticks or celery for the body. Attach wings made of thinly sliced apples with peanut butter and decorate with halved grapes or dried fruit.

Frosty fruits- Frozen treats are popular in the warm months. Put fresh fruit such as melon chunks in the freezer. Make popsicles by inserting sticks into bananas and freezing.

Bugs on a log- Use celery, cucumber, or carrot sticks as the log and add peanut butter. Top with dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, or cherries, depending on what bugs you want.

Homemade Trail mix- Use your favorite nuts and dried fruits, such as unsalted peanuts, cashews, walnuts, or sunflower seeds mixed with dried apples, pineapple or cherries. Add whole-grain cereals to the mix, too.

Potato person- Decorate half a baked potato using sliced cherry tomatoes, peas, and low-fat cheese on the potato to make a funny face.

Put kids in charge- Ask your child to name new veggie or fruit creations. Let him/her arrange raw veggies or fruits into a fun shape or design.

DON'T FORGET, HAVE FUN WITH YOUR CHILD!



Quick, easy recipes for you and your child- New Year's resolution time is just around the corner!

Fruit Slushy in a Can- You need one 15 oz. can of fruit in fruit juice, no sugar added. Put in freezer for about 2 hours until it doesn't slosh when shaken. Open can and put contents in blender. Whip until slushy consistency. Pour into bowls and serve with spoons immediately. Enough for 2.

Yogurt Parfait- You need 2 cups chunked canned pineapple; 1 cup frozen raspberries; 3 cups vanilla yogurt; 1 medium peeled and sliced banana; 1/3 cup chopped dates; 1/4 cup slice toasted almonds. Add the pineapple, raspberries, dates, bananas and yogurt in layers to a tall glass or sundae dish. Sprinkle almonds all over the top. Enough for 4.

Citrus Swirl- You need 1 cup frozen vanilla yogurt slightly softened, 1 tablespoon frozen lemonade or orange juice concentrate thawed but not diluted. In a mixing bowl, chop the frozen yogurt into tablespoon size pieces with spoon. Drizzle on the lemonade or juice concentrate and stir slightly, but do not blend completely. Spoon into a serving dish and top with fresh fruit. Enough for 1.

Sensational Five Star Fruit Salad- For salad, you need 1 sweet pineapple (fresh, frozen or canned), peeled, cored, and diced into small cubes; 1 mango peeled and sliced into thin strips; 3 green Anjou pears, cored and diced into small cubes (leave the peel on for color and fiber); 1 large ruby red grapefruit, segmented; seeds of 1 pomegranate; For dressing, you need 5 limes; 3 tablespoons honey. Squeeze the juice from the limes. Wisk the lime juice and honey. Combine all the fruit, or layer in a clear bowl. Pour the dressing on top and serve. Enough for 6.

Fruit Dipping- You need 1 cup applesauce; 1 cup low-fat strawberry yogurt; slices of fruits such as strawberries, apples, bananas, pineapple, or grapes. Combine applesauce and yogurt in a bowl and mix until well-blended. Pour into a serving bowl and serve with sliced fruits. Dip away!

Salsa and Corn Cheese Sticks- You need corn tortillas; low-fat mozzarella cheese sticks and salsa (you can buy your favorite kind in the grocery store). Wrap corn tortillas around the cheese sticks. Dip the wraps into the salsa and enjoy!

Strawberry-Orange Frozen Pops- You need 1 quart orange juice; 2 cups strawberries; 1 cup vanilla yogurt; sugar to taste if strawberries are unsweetened. Combine into blender and blend till smooth or not so smooth, depending on your preference. Pour into molds and freeze. Makes 24 frozen pops. Serving size is 1 pop.

Frozen Fruit Treat- You need 1 ¾ cup strawberries; 1 large can crushed pineapple; 5 bananas cut into cubes; 12 ozs. Frozen orange juice concentrate; 1 ½ cups water. Mix ingredients together. Freeze in small paper cups. Serve partially defrosted.

Orange-Banana Crush- You need 1 peeled orange cut into chunks, 1 medium banana peeled and cut into chunks; 1 can (6 ozs) unsweetened pineapple juice; 1 cup crushed ice; 1 tablespoon honey. In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend until smooth. 3 servings.

Banana Nut Smoothie- You need 2 ripe bananas; 2 cups pineapple juice; 2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter; 1 teaspoons plain yogurt; 1 – ½ teaspoons vanilla extract; 6 ice cubes; Nutmeg. Combine all ingredients, except nutmeg, in blender. Cover and run on high until smooth and well blended. Sprinkle with nutmeg. Makes 4 (1 cup) servings.

Pineapple Fizz- You need 1 ½ cups pineapple juice; 2 large scoops pineapple sherbet; ½ cup sparkling water. In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend until smooth. Enough for 1.

Have a wonderful holiday season. Be safe and stay healthy!

