Smart Eating for the Holidays

Americans often gain one-to-two pounds during the holiday season.

While this weight gain isn't a lot, research shows it tends to stick and add up over the years. These extra pounds can be avoided by thinking about what are going to eat, eating in moderation and taking a few simple steps.

- In preparation for a big holiday party or feast, do not skip meals throughout the day as this may result in overeating.

- **Eat Breakfast!** Research shows that people who eat a good breakfast eat fewer calories throughout the day. Include lots of fiber by eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Most higher fiber foods can help your stomach feel satisfied without extra calories if they are not prepared with a lot of extra fats and sugars.

- Holiday meals tend to be large, buffet-style and include second and third helpings. Avoid eating large portions of foods that you think are “healthy.” Include nutrient-rich foods, but remember that these foods have calories, too. Eat them in moderation, especially if they have added fats and sugars. Enjoy a little dessert, too!

- To help avoid overeating:
  - Use a smaller plate, put less food on your plate and watch the portion size.
  - Fill your plate with vegetables and salad before the entrees and desserts. Eating a salad before your meal can help you eat fewer calories overall.
  - Eat slowly and savor every bite. Wait 10 minutes before going for seconds as you may not be hungry.
  - After dinner, get some physical activity. Walk, dance, play, whatever you can do!

Attention Senior Citizens:

Have a nutritional question or concern? If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County’s Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible to have free consultations with Lester Rosenzweig, Registered Dietitian. Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, at 372-1622, ext. 269. Leave a message, if necessary, for Les to call you back.
What is a good breakfast?

- Your best bet is a mix of foods that have carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats, and fiber. Carbs will give you energy right away, and the protein will give you energy later on. Fiber and protein will help you feel full. Ideally, you should get between 7-and-10 grams of fiber and about 20 grams protein at breakfast.

- You don’t need to eat a big meal for breakfast, but it’s a good idea to have something small within an hour of waking up.

- Try a whole-grain cereal, low-fat milk and fruit, or a breakfast smoothie made from low-fat yogurt, fruit, and a teaspoon of bran. Nuts or whole-grain granola bars are also easy options.

Healthy Holiday Gift Ideas

**Fruit Basket** - Fill a basket or decorative bowl or platter with colorful fruits of all varieties, fresh and dried. Add nuts and a nut cracker.

**Soup Starter Kit** - Fill a crock pot or large mason jar or container with a variety of dry beans, whole grain brown rice and dry seasonings. You can add a cookbook on crock pot cooking or soups.

**Exercise Bag** - Buy an attractive canvas bag and include a colorful water bottle, hand/wrist weights, pedometer and a calendar. Include a gift certificate to a health club or sporting goods store.

**Tea and Coffee Sampler** - Fill a basket or large mug with a variety of flavored teas and coffee sampler packs.

**Pasta Set** - Fill a pasta pot or gift bag with a variety of pastas, including whole wheat pasta. Add a couple of jars of sauce and some dry seasonings or parmesan cheese.

References: Eatright.org Stay Mindful with 4 Tips for Holiday Eating
www.webmd.com/food-recipes/most-important-meal#1
www.diabetesforecast.org/2011/sep/

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness in Nutrition (WIN).

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