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A BAKER’S DOZEN: CEDARS-SINAI NUTRITIONIST OFFERS HOLIDAY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR PARENTS AND THEIR KIDS

LOS ANGELES, CA (November 12, 2003) – Holiday celebrations offer an array of temptations for partygoers to abandon healthy nutrition habits, while calorie-laden foods pose a special challenge for the many American children and adults who are struggling with the proverbial “battle of the bulge.”

“The key to successfully navigating the holiday season for your family,” says Netty Levine, R.D., a dietitian at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, “is to plan ahead by outlining a practical weight management strategy that doesn’t leave you and your children feeling deprived, but will help kids and their parents to avoid weight gain during the next couple of months.”

The good news is that adults and children alike can enjoy the wonderful foods of the holiday season as long as they do so in moderation. “Limiting portions, making sure that children are eating nutritious meals, and bringing something healthy to a holiday party are all ways to help to prevent weight gain over the holidays,” says Netty. The following are her “baker’s dozen” holiday weight management tips for family members:

1. Instead of putting family members on a diet, practice healthy eating before the holidays begin by changing the proportions of the foods you serve. Start out by helping children divide their plates into four imaginary sections: one for fruit, one for vegetables, one for starch, and one for protein. Serve low or non-fat milk and/or water with meals.
2. If going to a party, keep the rest of the day’s food selections healthier. Prepare red, yellow, and green peppers in small strips and store in plastic snack baggies. Buy baby carrots in pre-packaged plastic bags or prepare your own to give to your kids when they want to have a snack. Before leaving for a party, offer these colorful veggies to help curb their appetites. Fill them up a little; and they will be a little less tempted to over-eat at the party.
3. Allow your children one dessert per event and discuss this with them in advance. If accompanying the child to the party, supervise their choice by asking them what they really want out of what is available and reinforcing that they cannot have everything.
4. Do a trade-off with exercise. Eating more during the holidays can be partially off-set by a moderate and daily increase in physical exercise. Try 10 or 15-minute brisk walks twice a

- day with available family members. Plan active play dates instead of the movies where they would have a tendency to sit more and ask for “junk foods.”
5. If you are throwing the party, have lots of vegetables available, instead of chips only. Prepare lower fat dips and offer salsa. Explain to your guests in advance your resolve to make this a healthier holiday season and ask them to keep this in mind when preparing any dish they may be bringing.
 6. Limit high calorie beverages such as sodas, juices, smoothies, and blended coffee drinks or skip altogether if indulging on a particular dessert. There are nearly 150 calories in one 12-ounce can of soda or juice. Smoothies and coffee drinks are often 250-500 calories, excluding the whipped cream.
 7. Avoid skipping meals. Starving yourself before a party or get-together increases the odds that all will overeat when the festivities begin.
 8. At holiday meals, eat more of the roasted turkey since it is naturally lower in fat and calories and take less of the gravy, stuffing, and that second piece of pie. Offering alternatives of cranberry sauce, plain baked yams, and light whipped cream or fat-free frozen yogurt on pie are all ways to enjoy food while keeping calories down.
 9. If the holiday party is at your house, send some of the left-overs home with your guests.
 10. Encourage your kids and family members to eat slowly, which will help all concerned to eat less and feel full and satisfied.
 11. When baking holiday cookies, buy smaller cookie cutters. Sample fewer cookies by munching on other “sweets” like diced apples, pears, and strawberries that are set up near the cooking area.
 12. During the holidays, make your goal to maintain your weight – not to lose weight.
 13. Be positive. Don’t let your weight and cravings take control of you.

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is one of the largest non-profit academic medical centers in the Western United States. For the fifth straight two-year period, Cedars-Sinai has been named Southern California’s gold standard in health care in an independent survey. Cedars-Sinai is internationally renowned for its diagnostic and treatment capabilities and its broad spectrum of programs and services, as well as breakthrough in biomedical research and superlative medical education. Named one of the 100 “Most Wired” hospitals in health care in 2001, the Medical Center ranks among the top 10 non-university hospitals in the nation for its research activities.

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