



Joan Kortbein
Registered Dietitian
Certified Diabetes Educator



Here we go...time for parties, eating, shopping, eating, baking and... eating. The holiday season adds a lot of extra duties to your already hectic life. In order to get it all done most people sacrifice sleep, exercise, and often grab convenience foods on the go rather than meals at home.

It is no wonder that by the time the holidays are over you are exhausted. [Here are some tips to consider for taking care of you in the weeks ahead:](#)

Consider breaking exercise down into small, but more frequent sessions rather than cut it out.

Exercise has so many potential benefits including stress management, improved energy, better sleep and burning some of those extra holiday calories – all of which can help you manage the additional holiday responsibilities. Studies show when you get your heart rate elevated for even 10 minutes, an hour later your metabolism is still humming at a higher level. So even if you could commit to 10 minutes of activity daily, or a few times a day, you will still have some of the benefits. It will also keep you in the habit of exercising.

Make a plan before you load your plate.

Before you fill your plate survey your food options and make your plan. What foods are being served, what foods do you only get this time of the year, or what foods could you skip because you can eat them anytime? Start by using a small plate or carrying food on a napkin to help control portions, try to eat slowly and be mindful so you enjoy your food, if it doesn't taste good don't finish eating it, and wait 15-20 minutes before taking seconds since it takes that long for your brain to get the message that your stomach has enough food in it. If you don't love it – don't eat it; if you love it – enjoy it.

Socialize away from the food at parties.

Appetizers, dessert tables and buffets are the "perfect storm" for overeating. Stand with your back to the food, keep a beverage in your hand, get involved in a holiday activity and enjoy socializing with those around you at parties. Pace yourself and listen to your body's cues so you don't keep eating when you are already satisfied.

Rethink your drink.

Soda, punch, juices and alcohol can contain significant calories that studies show do not curb your appetite.

Don't go to your holiday parties and family gatherings hungry.

When your body is hungry, physically you will crave more sugary foods because your body is looking for quick fuel and you will likely overeat. Emotionally, most people overeat because they feel like they have "saved up" the calories to overindulge. If you have a holiday party tonight, make sure you have a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins for breakfast and lunch. You could also have a snack before going that has fiber and/or protein so you don't arrive starving such as a string cheese, Greek yogurt, quarter cup of nuts or fruit.

Eat mindfully.

In other words...pay attention. How does the food taste, is it hot or cold, sweet or salty, soft or crunchy, etc... Slow down, put small amounts of food on your plate each trip to the food table so you have to make a conscious decision to get more food, and load up on lower calorie foods such as raw or roasted veggies and cut up fruit when you go to the food table. Interestingly, research has shown that you eat less when you cut one bite of food at a time rather than cutting everything up before you dig in.

Know you will indulge sometimes.

The worst thing that can happen if you overeat is that you feel like you "blew it" and keep eating. When you spend too much money on one item at the store, do you go back to buy everything in the store? Eating healthy is not eating perfectly – it is eating moderately. One day doesn't make-or-break your weight.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and a health 2019!