



## Wishing You a Healthy Holiday

As the holidays draw near, many of us find our calendars filled with family get-togethers, office parties, lunches and dinners with friends, church functions, and other social gatherings. While we try to get ready for the holidays, most of us are resigned to the annual holiday weight gain. This doesn't have to happen—you *can* get through the holidays without putting on the extra pounds.

Consider this: a traditional holiday meal can supply upwards of 3,000 calories. That's more calories from a single meal than what most people require for a whole day. How can this be? At potlucks, meals eaten out, and special occasions, we tend to eat larger portions of foods that are high in fat and sugar.

Here are some simple tips to help you avoid the extra calories and extra pounds:

- ☞ Eat moderate portions of food. If you want to try “everything,” take small portions.
- ☞ Resist heaping your plate full of food even if it is the holiday season.
- ☞ Avoid taking seconds. If staying at the table with the food “staring” at you is too tempting, stand up and sit elsewhere.
- ☞ Limit yourself to one small serving of appetizers, entrees, and desserts. Choose snacks wisely.
- ☞ Modify your recipes to reduce the fat and sugar. For most baked products except cakes, added fat, oil or sugar can be reduced by as much as one third without affecting taste and quality.

- ☞ Substitute low calorie ingredients for foods high in fat or sugar. For example, low-fat yogurt can replace traditional high fat ingredients in dips.
- ☞ Limit alcohol intake—these drinks pack a lot of calories and essentially no other nutrients.
- ☞ Schedule time to be physically active. Walk or do other activities that will burn up some of those extra calories. Being active also helps relieve stress.
- ☞ Fasting all day before a party can cause fatigue and overeating. It may help to eat a high carbohydrate, low fat “mini-meal” before you go.

It is possible to eat some of everything during the holidays and not consume excessive calories. The key is to eat sensibly, be more physically active, and reduce calories where possible, while realizing that some foods we eat during the holidays will be high in calories.

The holidays are a special time to gather family and friends—let that be the focus of attention, rather than what everyone brought for the potluck. Enjoy the holidays! We wish you good health in the New Year!

Visit our Nutrition Education for Wellness (NEW) website at [www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW)