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## Enjoying, not overindulging this holiday season

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The holidays are right around the corner and while they're only a few days in length, the reality is that holiday celebrations begin around Thanksgiving and don't end until after the New Year.

Between work soirees, school parties, and numerous gatherings with friends and family it's easy to let go of your healthy habits and pack on a few unhealthy pounds.

But — not all hope is lost, with some diligence, self-control and planning, you can enjoy the holiday season and still fit in your favorite pair of jeans come Jan. 1.

We are all excited to go to holiday get-togethers — dressing up, rubbing elbows with the who's who of the neighborhood all while noshing on some hors d'oeuvres helps to break the pattern of our everyday routine.

Many people think that they need to skip meals in order to make up for the indulgent eating at these events. This is the first mistake. If you arrive to an event hungry, you're more likely to overeat. Rather than stuff yourself silly, have a small snack to fill your

belly, which will help you make better choices.

Leave the food table. Once you have filled your plate, it's best to remove yourself from temptation. Remember why you're there — to celebrate the season with others.

Engage in conversation, hit the dance floor if there is one. The longer you linger by the chips and dip, the more likely you will continue to eat them. If you're at an event where there are passed appetizers, keep track of how many you're eating. It's easy to overeat when you think that you've only had a mere one or two coconut shrimp.

"Always use a smaller plate if it is available," recommends Rebecca Aslam, registered dietician at Sturdy Memorial Hospital. "This helps to maintain portion control and limits how many items from the buffet you can fit. Stay away from the heavy cream sauced items or fried items, as these will be higher in fat and calorie count. Make your plate festive by aiming to have half of your plate filled with fruits and vegetables."

Only eat until you are satisfied, it takes about 20 minutes for your body to recognize that it does not need any more food. Eat slowly

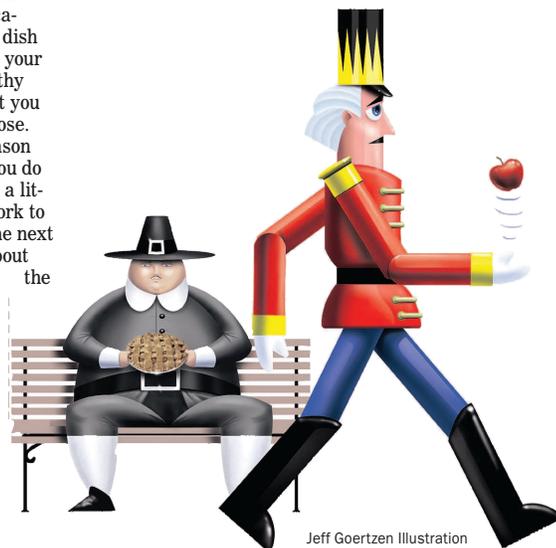
and stay in tune with your body's signals or you will be suffering with that all too familiar feeling of being stuffed.

Plan your indulgences. Special treats lurk around every corner during the holidays. If you know your favorite dessert will be at Thanksgiving dinner, work to include a healthy breakfast that morning. Your whole day does not need to be a binge of decadent dishes. Offer to bring a dish to some of the gatherings on your calendar and make it a healthy one. This will guarantee that you have a healthy option to choose.

Enjoying tastes of the season is perfectly fine as long as you do not over-do it. If you indulge a little too much at one event, work to get yourself back on track the next day. Remember, life is all about balance, especially during the chaotic holiday season.

**THE REGISTERED** Dieticians in Nutrition Services at Sturdy Memorial Hospital can work with you to help you stay healthy this holiday season, for more information call 508-236-8039 or visit [www.sturdyhospital.org](http://www.sturdyhospital.org).

### How to enjoy the season's bounty without paying for it later



Jeff Goertzen Illustration