

## Five Tips for Holiday Eating and Beyond

*"When you are free to eat whatever you want, food quickly loses its power over you. you are able to eat ANYTHING, without eating EVERYTHING." - Dr. Michelle May*

Well, next week is Thanksgiving and they've begun to show up in women's magazines, newspapers, online and on TV - those obligatory articles with tips about how to prevent weight gain during the holiday season. They're filled with ideas about tofu turkey and "skinny" mashed potatoes and healthy desserts. So, I've decided to join the crowd and share five non-diet approach tips about how to eat not only through the holidays, but for the rest of your life.

**1. Eat when you're hungry.** Wow, what a concept! Physical hunger is the signal that your body needs fuel to carry on the activities of life. Do you pay attention to this signal? Or, do you eat because "it's time" or because someone has brought doughnuts to the meeting, or because you're upset and need to comfort yourself? Come to the table hungry - you will enjoy your food more and your body will get the fuel it needs when it needs it.

**2. Eat what you really want.** I don't know about you, but I have a turkey sandwich a few times a week for lunch, so turkey is not real high on my list come Thanksgiving dinner. I want the items that I only get once or twice a year, namely homemade noodles, sage-y dressing, sweet potato casserole, my cousin's cranberry-orange gelatin mold and pumpkin pie with real, yes, real whipped cream. You can keep the broccoli and the salad until the day after Thanksgiving, thank you. Obviously, you don't want to "carb out" like this everyday - but the point is that all foods can fit into a healthy, balanced diet.

**3. Eat until you're not hungry anymore.** That doesn't mean the same thing as "Eat until you're stuffed" or "Eat until your plate is clean." I learned many years ago that your stomach is about the size of your fist. That's a surprising concept to many people and very helpful for weight management. Now, think about what your plate at Thanksgiving dinner looks like; will all that food fit into your fist? Probably not, but you really want to taste all 17 different items on the table. Well, you know there will be leftovers, so enjoy several foods that are your favorites and save the others for your next meal. You still get to try all 17 dishes, just not at the same time, and believe me, you'll enjoy them more this way and not feel miserable afterward.

**4. Be honest with yourself.** Unless you're a celebrity who's invited to a party every night from now through December, a couple of holiday meals and a handful of parties do not add up to a whole lot of extra pounds. For those of you who are worried about gaining weight this holiday season, you're probably already concerned about your current weight - maybe you tend to overeat or perhaps you've been very restrictive with your eating and now that the holidays are here, you feel you deserve to partake of all the holiday goodies. Instead of feeling guilty or regretful, be gentle with yourself this season. Try following the first three tips and become an instinctive eater who is in

tune with her body regardless of the occasion.

**5. Enjoy your family, friends and life.** Even though many of our holiday celebrations involve food and plenty of it, remember it's not about the food. It's about spending time with people we love. So, move away from the table and settle in for a conversation with the cousin you haven't seen in six months, rock your brother's new baby to sleep, go toss the football around in the backyard with your best friends, or gather 'round the piano while your grandmother plays your favorite songs.

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