

# RSI Wellness Watch



## Heart-healthy Holiday Survival Tips

The holidays are here again! It's that special time of year to celebrate with family, friends, and coworkers but unfortunately, for many, practicing healthy holiday eating and staying committed to exercise can often be a challenge and can lead to weight gain.

Duke University Medical Center reports that the average American gains five pounds between Thanksgiving and New Years, mainly due to lack of moderation with foods and failing to stick with an exercise program.

Give yourself a gift this year by maintaining your weight and keeping your heart healthy, while not feeling deprived. If you prepare and set goals for gatherings, you are more likely to stay focused and less likely to overindulge.

**While enjoying the festivities this year, follow these *heart-healthy holiday survival tips* to help avoid downfall:**



- ◆ **Don't go to a party hungry.**  
Eat something healthy before you leave for the party to avoid feeling famished and in turn avoid overeating in a mouthwatering display of calorie-rich foods.
- ◆ **Eat more food with low-calorie density.**  
Foods that have low-calorie density retain excess water. So vegetables, fruits, puffy grains such as rice or couscous are sensible choices that help you feel full.
- ◆ **Control your portions.**  
Go for small portions so you can sample a variety of foods. Moderation is always the key.
- ◆ **Bring a favorite low-calorie dish to holiday parties.**  
This will guarantee at least one "safe" food will be available.
- ◆ **Don't stand by the food.**  
This will help minimize temptation. Try to indulge in conversation instead.
- ◆ **Limit alcohol consumption.**  
Alcohol increases your appetite and lowers your inhibitions which could make you less concerned about eating healthy. If you do drink alcohol, drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- ◆ **Practice using recipe substitutes.**  
Try the following lower-fat recipe substitutes: Instead of one whole egg, use 2 egg whites; Instead of regular sour cream, use low fat plain yogurt or low fat sour cream; Instead of whole milk, use skim or 1%; Instead of ice cream, use frozen yogurt; Instead of regular cheese, use low fat cheese; Instead of heavy cream (not for whipping), use 2 Tbsp flour whisked into 2 cups skim milk.
- ◆ **Put things into perspective.**  
Enjoy the holidays by centering most of your entertainment around non-food events like renting holiday movies, ice skating, or touring holiday displays.
- ◆ **Make time for fitness.**  
Remind yourself that exercise is a priority no matter how hectic the season feels. Following a consistent exercise program is a key element to maintaining a healthy lifestyle and avoiding weight gain.

Remember, this time of year doesn't have to result in holiday weight gain! Keep yourself healthy by following these helpful holiday tips and taking advantage of any wellness opportunities that your insurance carrier may provide.