



Holiday ideas to 'maintain, not gain'

I've lost 30 pounds this year. During the holidays, I want to make sure I "maintain, not gain." Any hints?

First, congratulations on your weight loss. You should be proud.

You probably already know this, but it's not easy to keep weight off once you do lose it. Experts continue to examine why that is. Some cite a lack of emphasis on maintenance in weight-loss programs; others believe biology plays a stronger role, blaming significant changes in metabolism during and after weight loss. Those changes often make battling weight regain a Herculean task.

Despite the challenges, there's hope. Here are some ideas that could help you attain your no-weight-gain goal during the holidays:

- Be aware that you're going to encounter a lot of cues that will tempt you to indulge in special treats. Try to counter the temptation by keeping reminders of the positive results when you resist the urge. For example, post photos of your new, svelte self on your refrigerator, inside your pantry and even on your office desk, especially if your workplace tends to be generous with holiday goodies. Another idea: Buy some healthy-living magazines and place them in spots where you know they'll catch your eye.

- Know your trigger foods and the times of day when you run into trouble, and ask for help. If you know you have trouble resisting nacho chips at holiday parties, ask a friend to help

you keep yourself under control. If you tend to have difficulty when you're home alone in the evenings, ask someone to call or text you each night for the next few weeks with a gentle reminder to stay the course. Such support can go a long way.

- Think about tactics you've used in the past and renew those efforts: Keep a stash of celery sticks in the refrigerator to fill up on before going to a party. Brush your teeth after every meal. Park at the farthest parking space to help you add steps to your day. Think about what works for you, and make the decision to do it.

- Be vigilant about sticking with your regular healthy routine: eating a healthy breakfast, drinking plenty of water, getting a good night's rest and engaging in some type of physical activity every day. Keep yourself accountable by keeping a daily record.

- Give yourself permission to enjoy the foods of the holiday season, but in moderation. Go ahead and savor a few bites of your favorite treat, but realize you don't need to eat the whole portion. And, look for ways to be kind to yourself that don't involve food, such as going to a mind-body class like yoga or Pilates. The rewards are great — and you'll begin the new year on the right track.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.



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