

EATING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Navigating the holidays can be tricky. Instead of enjoying everything the holidays have to offer, we find ourselves falling into the same unfavorable patterns; “I’m not going to eat all day because I know I’m going to eat a lot for dinner”, “I’m going to eat as many sweets as I can because after this I’m not going to have anymore”, “My diet starts tomorrow so I’m going to eat whatever I want today”, sound familiar? Despite our best efforts, these methods usually fail. We resort back to the poor choices we were so desperately trying to avoid. So how do we make this holiday season different?

LEAVE THE DIET MENTALITY BEHIND

This idea of restricting our food intake can be more harmful than helpful. Typically, the opposite of what you would expect tends to happen. Periods of chronic undereating are usually followed by periods of overeating. The same can be said for eating "perfectly" or being overly meticulous about our food choices. There is nothing wrong with being invested in your health and well-being, but problems tend to arise when this is taken to an extreme. A common scenario is when we “eat right” all week long to earn the right to splurge, but these splurges almost always backfire with unwanted weight gain overtime. This year reject the diet principles that have let you down time & time again!

STAY CONSISTENT

In an attempt to control our caloric intake we try to skip meals or restrict the number of times we eat during the day. Then we ask ourselves, "I'm barely eating, how am I still gaining weight?". Skipping meals can lead to overeating by back loading your calories to the end of the day. This can make it difficult for your body to process nutrients properly and slows down your metabolism. A good rule of thumb is 3 meals per day with 1 to 3 snacks. This format will allow your body to appropriately communicate when you are hungry and when you are full.

BE PRESENT

Try sitting at a table with minimal distractions (phones, TV, etc.). Being mindful during meals allows you to enjoy your food and gives your brain time to recognize when you are satisfied. Remember to savor your meal and don't rush! This will allow you to consume what your body needs and stop before becoming uncomfortably full.

HAVE THE DESSERT!

Embrace the foods you normally would not have during the year (you'll drive yourself crazy if you don't!). During the holidays we are faced with so many sweets and treats and we try so hard to avoid anything deemed "unhealthy". So when you finally do let yourself have a dessert it can be hard to stop or only have a moderate amount. Instead of depriving yourself, allow yourself to have a treat if you truly want it! This normalizes the once forbidden foods and you no longer crave them. You are now able to indulge in moderation and without guilt because these foods are no longer off limits.

This holiday season stress less about the food you eat and take time to be thankful for the people you get to share it with! If you have any questions or would like additional guidance during the holidays, please reach out to nutrition@potomacpediatrics.com or give our office a call to schedule an appointment.

Eat, drink, & be merry!

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