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Happy Healthy Holidays - the 3 Wise "Nots"

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2. How to Not Gain Weight:

- Stick with your exercise regimen

no matter what - If that means foregoing the favorite tv show (vs. exercise), it's better to have exercised. A cardio-workout helps burn twice the calories later while you're "at rest" getting ready for the holidays.

- Eat breakfast, preferably with a

solid protein base. Sugary cold cereals and hot cereals (sans nuts and fiber) increase cravings later in the day. Re: later meals, it's been found that eating vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts and cabbage stabilizes blood sugar into the next day. (see reference 1)

- Do not use a party as a mealtime;

eat beforehand - and pick at your favorite selections at the event. It's better for both your social life and waistline.

- Watch the alcohol, especially

before eating -Before a meal, alcohol increases appetite and leads to overeating. Drinking alcohol is like drinking dessert, since its hidden sugar packs on calories and causes fat deposition. A glass of wine has some health benefits, so taking sips with a meal helps lower the negative effects.

- Get enough rest to avoid feeling

The holiday season brings more than its share of "To Do" lists for everyone. However, years of experience as a nutritionist and health practitioner have led me to think there are some specific "To-Not-Do" items pertaining to the holiday season which can help make it a better time for everyone:

1. How to Not Get Sick:

- Wash hands frequently and keep

them away from your mouth and nose. The most common mechanism of contracting a virus is to bring it into contact with the mucus membranes of the body.

- Keep up with antioxidant foods

and supplement intake - For example, in our clinic we test patients for zinc deficiency, which is linked to susceptibility to infections. Vitamin C is also a standby as are green tea, pomegranate juice, sweet potatoes and lycopene (obtainable from tomatoes).

- Don't Stay Up Too Late - Have

you noticed that holidays tend to promote the overextension of efforts? Is it worth baking 50 dozen cookies or spending hours with elaborate gift wrap if you'll become too ill or tired to enjoy them? Your immune system will benefit from sleep, and the energy reserve will come in handy during exposure to seasonal germs.

- Practice good food hygiene -

Recipes made with raw eggs, mayonnaise, or raw poultry and fish should be processed without contaminating other food prep surfaces. They should also be thrown out after being served, even if out for only a couple of hours. Avoid a trip to the ER in the middle of the night because you felt obliged to eat the leftover whitefish.

worn out - Worth mentioning again, since research reveals that weight loss will not occur without adequate sleep, about 7-8 hours. (see reference 2)

3. How to Not Get so Stressed

- Do Not Overcommit - Cortisol

is the stress hormone produced in response to going past one's innate energy level. It causes weight gain, fatigue and poor memory, not to mention deterioration of the spirit of the occasion and season.

- Keep it All in Perspective -

Dave Barry wrote "Once again we come to the holiday season, a deeply religious time that each of us observes in his own way, by going to the mall of his choice." Yes, there are more "To-Do's" than "Not-To-Do's" tugging for attention. Attitude might be a cure, because thoughts cause chemical reactions which affect physical health. Why not practice this outlook - "As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December's bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same." - Donald Westlake.

- Whip Out the Humor - Lighten

that load. Read or tell funny stories about the holidays, show funny movies, play interactive party games. Holidays are an opportunity to build memories. Family and friends will remember good times and the enjoyment of each other's company (including the new "not-so-stressed you").

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season!

References:

1) Second-meal effect: low-glycemic-index foods eaten at dinner improve subsequent breakfast glycemic response, TM Wolever et al., American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol 48, 1041-1047,

2) www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/guide/lose-weight

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