

Top Tips for the Holidays

From a Dietitian

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Holiday Messaging

Every year, we're inundated with messaging that creates stress and food guilt during the holidays

Stressing about weight gain and food choices over the holidays can lead to

- Poor mental health
- Not being present during events
- An obsession of food and eating healthy – orthorexia
- A preoccupation with having to “work off” any calories you consume



Holiday Myths

Most people gain high amounts weight during the holidays

- A study found that on average a person gained no more than 5 pounds during the holiday season
- Another study found that participants gained 1.5 pounds during the 6 weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas

A cleanse is the best way to get you back on track after the holidays

- There currently is very limited research on the effectiveness of cleanses
- Some commercial products can be dangerous and are not regulated by the FDA



Holiday Myths

You should find ways to make your favorite foods healthier

- Changing some of your favorite traditional foods that you get once a year takes away the experience and can leave you feeling deprived after you eat this food. This can lead to you eating more of it in the long run



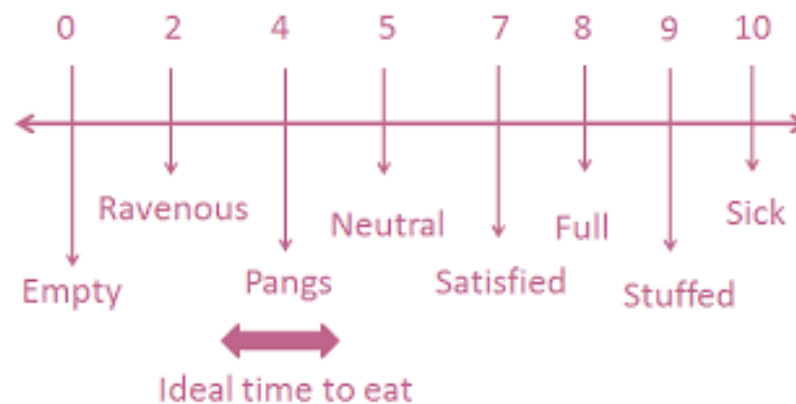
A Dietitian's Tips for the Holidays

These tips are not all-encompassing; some might resonate with you, some might not.

Feel free to pick and choose what tips you think will work for your holidays

Tip 1: Don't skip meals throughout the holidays or bank calories for a big meal

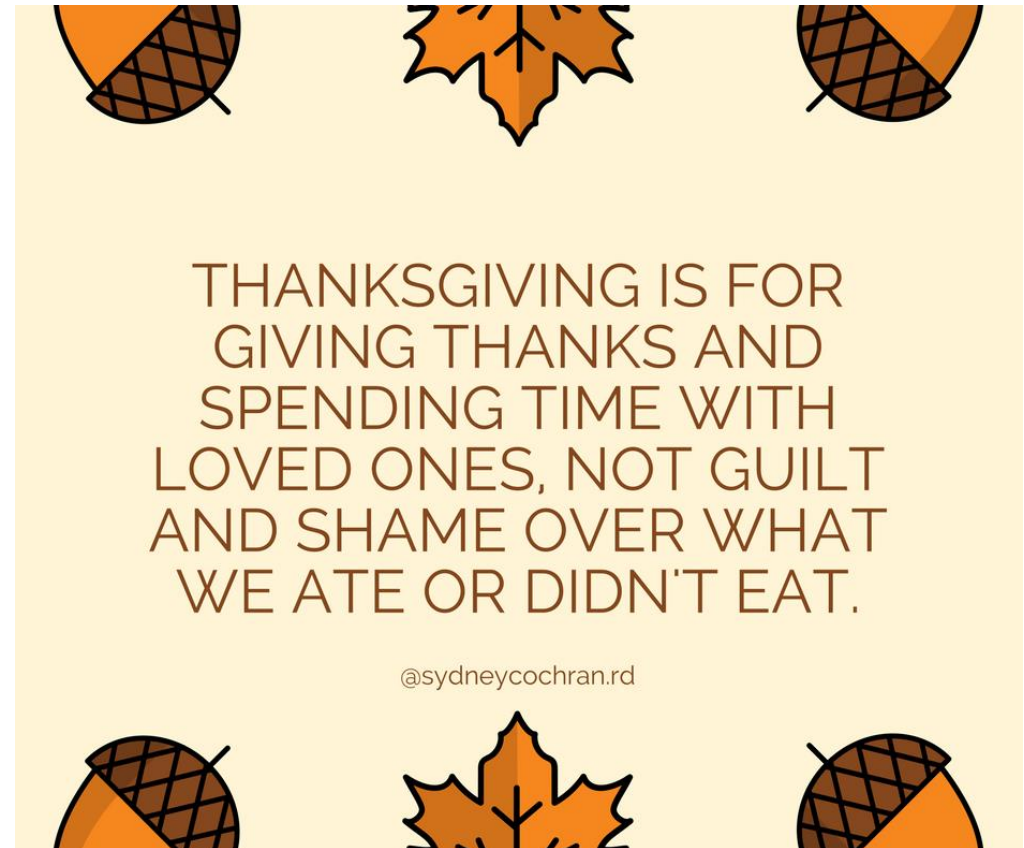
- Ultimately, this leads to consuming more calories in the long run due to being “hangry”
- Its best to eat at regular meal times and even enjoy a small snack 60-90 minutes before
- This can help you enjoy the food more mindfully



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Tip 2: Don't feel guilty about the food you eat

- Food guilt does not help your mental or physical health
- You typically only eat these foods once a year, there's no need to feel bad about it
- Remember, it's only 1 day



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Tip 3: Focus on color

- Focus on adding color to your plate through fruit, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats
- Different colored foods mean different antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals

Tip 4: Alcohol in Moderation

- Women up to 1 drink per sitting, men up to 2 drinks per sitting
- Alcoholic drinks contribute empty calories and can impair judgement
- If partaking in drinks, alternate between sips of alcohol and sips of water



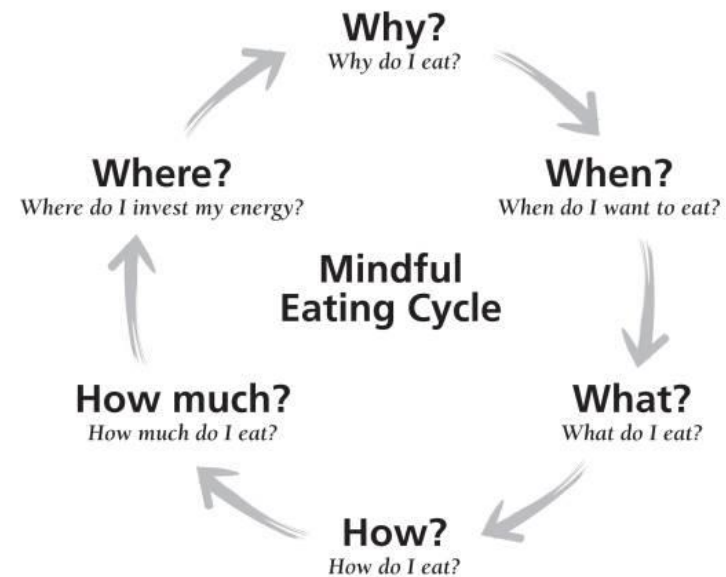
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Tip 5: Get moving

- Being physically active can improve digestion, emotions, and your overall health
- Don't focus on "burning off" calories, but moving to make you feel good
- Try going for a family walk, play a family game of basketball, or anything that brings you joy

Tip 6: Practice mindfulness when eating

- Eat your food slowly, focusing on how it tastes, the texture, etc



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Tip 7: Do an assessment of the buffet and choose which foods you wish to eat

- This helps you go in with a game plan, lets you fill your plate with foods that sound good, and skip foods that don't
- Use the hunger/fullness scale to help determine how hungry you are
 - This helps you fill your plate with foods that sound the best first and leave others that don't interest you

Tip 8: Enjoy those seasonal treats

- You only get these foods a few times a year, enjoying them when you can won't wreck your health
- If you restrict these goodies, eventually you will lose your control around the food and end up binging on these foods

Conclusion

The holidays should not be a time you are stressed about your food choices

Practice mindfulness and being present during holiday meals

- Enjoy the food and time with family

Use the hunger/fullness scale to help keep you from hitting “hangry” or for eating until you feel uncomfortable

Find ways to incorporate joyful movement into your day

Enjoy those seasonal foods without any guilt

Questions?

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Thank you!
