

Health Beat

HEALTH, MIND & BODY

UPMC Dietician: Gift Yourself Health this Holiday Season



April Mase, RD, LDN
Food and Nutrition, UPMC

The holidays are an exciting and joyous time of year for many of us. We're spending more time with family and friends, making new memories, and enjoying old traditions. This time of year, our focus tends to shift to others and in general it feels like we're being pulled in a million directions as we prepare for the next event, dinner, or gathering. It may be easy to get caught up in the fun of it all, but it is important to still make your health a priority.

Disciplined Diet

Our diet is something we all think about as we enter the holiday season. As soon as anyone hears the word "diet" they associate negative and restrictive feelings, which can be very challenging when others are indulging and enjoying the foods

and beverages associated with the season. However, you can turn what seems like a negative into a positive this year with the following tips:

- If you're in charge of bringing a dish to a gathering, make yourself a healthy option to share with your friends and family. There are many vegetable-based recipes that you can find that would be a better alternative to carb or cholesterol-heavy recipes.
- Moderation is key. Instead of completely cutting out stuffing, gravy, and other less healthy meal options, just eat a little less of it. Another option targeting moderation is to choose to leave another less healthy food off your plate and indulge responsibly in the food you're craving. Remember: when in doubt, balance it out.
- Don't skip meals. One might think that it would be better to reserve their calories for the big meal that will be shared with everyone at your holiday gathering. This is not the case, and you should still eat normal meals throughout the day. This will help regulate your metabolism and reduce the temptation of overindulging.

Maintain Movement

Just because you're on a break or taking vacation, doesn't mean you should take a break from your exercise routine.

Exercise is proven to be a mood booster and stress reliever. These are two things that can help you get through the madness of the holidays. A good tip is to get the whole family involved. You might all be in a food coma but taking a walk around the neighborhood after dinner to kickstart the digestion process will help everyone feel better.

When considering movement, put some extra money from your gifting budget aside for yourself for purchases targeting exercise. Spend it on a new exercise class that you've always wanted to try, a fitness tracker, a new piece of gym equipment, or even an experience such as an active vacation. It doesn't matter how you exercise as long as you get in your daily dose.

Dealing with Guilt

Guilt is a normal human emotion that can occur after an episode of binge eating, especially around the holidays. It is important to have the ability to recognize self-critical thoughts and learn how to change your narrative.

Remind yourself that you are in control. If necessary, you can even talk to the host of the party to discuss the food options and have

a plan ready. This preparation gives you time to deal with possible temptation before you're in a situation where you could act impulsively. You could also eat a healthy snack before going to a gathering so that you are less prone to overeating.

If you stray from your plan, it's okay. We're not perfect and sometimes giving in or taking a break may be just what we need. It's important to not dwell on the negative and instead focus on the goal you established and how you can get back on track. Take each meal as an opportunity to make healthful choices. Don't let one setback derail a trend towards healthful habits.

It is also helpful to remember the reasons why you are getting together to celebrate. Don't make food the focus of your holiday gathering. Instead, try to connect with everyone and be present in the festivities. Enjoy the season – the decorations, music, and good company – and use this time to reset and get ready for the next year ahead.

April Mase, RD, LDN, is a registered dietitian with UPMC in North Central Pa. Registered dietitians are the food and nutrition experts who translate the science of nutrition into practical solutions to help individuals make unique, positive lifestyle changes. For more information, visit UPMC.com.

**ADVERTISE
YOUR
BUSINESS
HERE!
570-724-2287**

Buckheit
Funeral Chapel & Crematory, Inc.

*Tioga County's
On-Site Crematory*

Jacquelyn A. Buckheit
Supervisor, Owner
637 S. Main St.
Mansfield, PA 16933
Ph. 570-662-8888
Fax 570-662-1146



800-341-5839 40 Buena Vista St, Wellsboro, PA 16901 prsmhealthcare.com

PRSM
HEALTHCARE

Better Scheduling, Better Healthcare, Better Health.

The premier GI medical scheduling company located in the heart of Wellsboro, offering steady employment and job opportunities to Tioga County.