

Q.

What can I do to manage big holiday meals better?

A.

It's about to begin. You know...the next couple of months are packed with more parties, treats,

and dining out than usual... and the big holiday meal.

But Instead of stressing out, canceling your plans, or feeling guilty about what you eat, try this:

Enjoy the meal. And spend time visiting with family and friends. Sound good?

It's all too easy to gain weight between now and New Year's if you don't pay attention to what you eat. In fact, a recent study found that the average adult gains 1 to 2 pounds during the holiday season.¹

That might not sound like a lot. But gaining a little weight every year can add up. It's one reason about 73.6 percent of adults are overweight or obese.² But it doesn't have to be that way.

So how do you handle big holiday meals and still enjoy the food?

It all looks so good when you sit down for a big holiday meal. Right?



Your Holiday-Meal Game Plan

You know...turkey and gravy, dressing, sweet potatoes, desserts, and more. The average person eats about 3,000 calories during a holiday meal.

You can still enjoy the feast. But to keep your calories in check when there's a big holiday meal on your schedule, try this basic action plan:

Before

Eat light, healthy meals and snacks during the day prior to the big meal. Choose a green salad, soup, or fruits and vegetables. Then when the dinner bell rings, you won't be as hungry.

Stepping on the scale daily, can also help you be mindful of your food choices during the holidays.³

During

If you really feel the need to indulge, sample everything on the table, just in smaller portions. Eat until you're full...not stuffed.

Drink water instead of alcohol, sparkling cider, juice or sugar-sweetened beverages.

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Take time to chew your food and visit with family and friends.

After

Plan to take a walk to burn off a few of those extra calories after the big meal. If the weather isn't ideal, go for a walk in a mall or put that treadmill to good use.

With a little planning, you can still enjoy the holiday meal and be healthy.

References

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2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Obesity and overweight. From: <https://tinyurl.com/h3wdjc7>
3. Kaviani, S., et al. (2019). Daily self-weighing to prevent holiday-associated weight gain in adults. *Obesity*, 27(6): 908. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y5ywg8xw>