



Media Contact: Nicole White
Phone: 310-423-5215
E-mail: nicole.white@cshs.org

CEDARS-SINAI EXPERT SERVES UP RECIPE FOR HEALTHY HOLIDAY EATING

Los Angeles, CA (Dec. 21, 2008) – The holiday season may bring visions of sugar plums dancing in our heads, but trouble can ensue when pies, cakes, cookies and other fatty holiday treats start dancing on our plates.

With careful planning and smart choices, you can have your fill of holiday cheer without filling your plate with calorie-rich foods, said Netty Levine, RD, CDE, a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator, at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

“You can enjoy your favorite traditional holiday foods in moderation without dragging extra pounds into the New Year,” Levine said. “Make smart choices at parties and in buffet lines, and on days you’re not celebrating make sure you’re eating healthy, well-balanced meals.”

Fitting in exercise, drinking plenty of water and maintaining a healthy diet will not only be good for your waist line, but can also ensure you have enough energy for the season’s many celebrations, Levine said.

She offers these suggestions for sensible eating during the holidays:

- Vow to maintain, not gain. If you’re on a long-term weight loss plan, make every effort to maintain your weight. Maintaining weight despite the season’s many temptations should be considered a reasonable goal.
- When going to a holiday potluck, bring along a healthy dish or treat you enjoy. Find ways to lighten up traditional recipes, or bring along a vegetable or fruit tray. Presentation and creativity count!
- Never go to a party hungry. Eat a small healthy meal or snack to ward off cravings, which can help make temptation easier to resist.
- Drink water. Avoiding high-calorie beverages will make those holiday splurges easier on your waist-line.
- When dining buffet-style, choose a smaller plate and pile it high with fruits, vegetables and green salads. Load up on lean roasted meats, and choose small portions of your holiday favorites
- Dodge the pre-dinner cocktail. Alcohol makes you hungrier, and lower inhibitions can lead to poor food choices. Opt instead for a drink with your meal. When ordering cocktails, reach for those made with a low- or no-calorie mixer.

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- Don't be too busy for breakfast. Starting the day with a healthy meal will help control cravings later.
- Be picky about dessert. Indulge only in your very favorites, and when presented with several dessert options, choose just one. Check in with yourself when eating. Do you want the whole portion of a rich treat, or do you feel satisfied after a few bites?
- Make time for exercise – be active when you can. Even short bits of exercise can add up.
- Focus on friends and family, not the food. Make the company of loved ones the center of your gathering – not the tasty treats.

To arrange interviews, please contact Nicole White, media specialist, at nicole.white@cshs.org or at (310) 423-5215.

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