

Healthy After the Holidays!

'Tis the Season!! The season for family, cheer, generosity, festive parties, and more! Unfortunately, it's also the season of tempting treats, stressful shopping, seemingly less time, mindless snacking, and feelings of guilt.

It's tough and overwhelming to maintain a healthy and balanced life during the joyous holiday season! However, I put this series together for you to address the typical holiday temptations that keep us from feeling as best as we can. Every Monday of this month you'll receive easy-to-implement strategies to help you feel prepared, in control, stress-free, guilt-free, and healthy this holiday season!

Sound good?

Great! Let's start with our first, basic strategy!

Eat more 'real' food.

What is real food? It's food that is not processed or minimally processed. If you're not sure, you can ask yourself if the food is something you would find in nature; 'whole foods.' Most whole foods don't come in a package and contain minimal ingredients.

Real food typically comes pre-packaged by nature- with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, and other nutrients our bodies need to thrive. These are the types of foods that give us sustained energy instead of leaving us feeling hungry again a short time later.

They can also help with weight loss or maintenance as well as our overall health and feeling of wellbeing.

Some examples include:

Vegetables

Fruit

Nuts

Seeds

Legumes

Grains

Quality protein

Most Americans don't get nearly enough vegetables in their diet, so that's a great place to start. Especially on the days you don't have any parties going on, try to be super good and eat mostly whole foods! Pack your lunch so you can be sure you'll have them. When you are at a party, try to reach for the dishes that are the least processed as possible, or better yet- offer to bring a dish! The host will love you and you'll be more at ease knowing there will be a dish that you can eat with peace of mind since you know exactly what's in it.

I'd suggest offering to bring a veggie plate with hummus as an appetizer, or if you want to bring a full dish I've been dying to try this Sweet Potato Casserole, definitely looks like a crowd-pleaser! Let me know how it comes out if you give it a try!!

https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/sweet-potato-casserole-with-herbed-mushroom-stuffing-vegan-recipe/#gs.6Ajp_7g

I love this website, Forks Over Knives, because not only are all the recipes vegan (for those of you who don't know I've been vegan for about 3.5 years), but they are made with minimally processed ingredients and are very conscious about added sugar, salt, and oil. Which brings me to my next point...

When you are cooking/baking, do your best to minimize the added sugar, salt, oil, butter, etc. Most of the time recipes call for WAY too much. Think about this...

½ cup sugar = **387 calories**

½ cup vegetable oil= **964 calories**

½ stick butter= **405 calories**

...And that's BEFORE you add the other ingredients!! Another issue with adding heaps of these items is that it makes your food hyper palatable- it literally excites your taste buds so much that it's even harder to stop eating once you've started.

So make things a little easier on yourself and try using ½ the recommended amount, or use a healthy substitution!

-Substitutes for sugar: agave, maple syrup, stevia, molasses

-Substitutes for vegetable oil: unsweetened applesauce, mashed banana, pumpkin puree

-Substitutes for butter: avocado, yogurt, applesauce, nut butter, pumpkin puree

You can save a whole lot of unnecessary calories by avoiding or minimizing those main culprits in your cooking.

Another easy way to save massive calories is avoiding the habit to “taste.” I’m definitely the first person guilty of licking the spoon, taking a “test” scoop, or nibbling on the ingredients that I pulled out for the recipe I’m making. But unfortunately those nibbles have calories too, and they add up very quickly without us even noticing! Try to make a habit of dumping the used bowls and spoons into the sink with soapy water right after you use it!

So this week I want you to really focus on:

- Eating more clean, whole foods

- Cooking with less sugar, salt, oil, butter (www.forksoverknives.com honestly has

so many great recipes with minimal amounts of those ingredients; as does Dr. McDougall which you can check out here

<https://www.drmcDougall.com/health/education/recipes/mcdougall-recipes/>)

- Avoiding taste tests and nibbling while cooking

Sound like something you can do? I THINK YES!!

Wishing you all the best!

Make it a great week,

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