

Secrets to avoid getting "stuffed" this holiday season

Nutrition expert suggests thinking about the "Five S's" to avoid typical one-to-ten-pound holiday-weight gain

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PHOENIX (Nov. 14, 2017) – You don't have to resort to using avocado as a substitute for eggs, cream or butter in your desserts or putting black beans in your brownies to avoid getting "stuffed" this Thanksgiving holiday, says a Banner Health registered dietician.

Instead of thinking of out-of-box alternatives and trendy diets, people interested in avoiding holiday-weight gain should think about the "Five S's", says Nicole Hahn, registered dietician and nutritionist at Banner Boswell Medical Center in Sun City, Arizona.

In her role, Hahn advises people how to eat more nutritiously to improve or maintain their health.

"Sometimes people really overthink their diets. It can be as simple as calories in and calories out," she said. "Just develop a game plan to create ways to practice good nutrition and keep active during the holidays."

Typical weight gain during the holidays that run from Halloween, through Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and New Year's, can be as much as ten pounds, she said.

In Hahn's experience, those who are the most successful in weight loss and maintenance are those who set realistic goals for themselves.

Here's Hahn's advice of the Five S's to keep your holiday nutrition simple and stress free:

- **Sample** – Think of that holiday potluck as a chance to sample items rather than a way to overfill your plate. Survey the spread, before digging in to identify those items that you know you will enjoy versus those that are not be worth the calories to you.
- **Sip** – as in water. Even though it is cooler outside, our bodies still need water. Frequently, our mind confuses hunger for thirst, so proper hydration can cut cravings. Sip, as in alcohol, too. Go easy of the alcoholic drinks since they have calories and can also curb your inhibitions and make it easier for you to justify going back for seconds and thirds at the buffet table.
- **Snack** – Don't think about "saving" your calories for a big meal. It will back fire on you by making you hungrier and slow your metabolism. It's better to have a snack before a big event to take the edge off.
- **Stand away from the food** – Go out and mingle at that party rather than hover over the food table. Also, keeping a bottle of water in your hand makes it easier to stand and talk and not think about going back for seconds.
- **Splurge** - If it is a holiday tradition for your family to have caramels or fudge, then indulge. Just remind yourself that this is a once-a-year treat and keep your serving size in check.

"It's really about moderation and using common sense and enjoying the holidays with your families and friends," Hahn said.

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