

... DECEMBER 2010 ...

QUICK TAKES



S.M.A.R.T Goals

It's easy to pack on unwanted pounds during the holidays, but by setting a S.M.A.R.T. goal you can help prevent this weight gain. Wellness experts define S.M.A.R.T. goals as:

- **S** is for Specific
- **M** is for Measurable
- **A** is for Attainable
- **R** is for Realistic, and
- **T** is for Timed

Here are some examples of S.M.A.R.T. goals to prevent this holiday weight gain:

- On days that I have a holiday party, I will engage in 30 minutes of physical activity
- At tonight's holiday party, I will only drink one alcoholic beverage

A Nutritionist's Guide to Holiday Eating

Holiday weight gain seems inevitable, but it doesn't have to be. We asked Sara Ryba, registered dietitian and certified nutritionist, to answer some important questions on holiday weight gain.

What makes it so easy to put on five to 10 pounds after Thanksgiving?

A lot of us start out saying, "I'm going to be perfect. I'm not going to be tempted." But then holiday cookies and cakes show up at the office, and there are parties right and left. Slowly, we taste the cake, the cookies, the eggnog -- each slip gets a little easier. Suddenly, we're not perfect anymore. Next thing you know, we're eating everything.



So how do we keep from "giving up?"

Go into the season with realistic expectations: Accept that you're going to indulge a little, and that if you gain two or three pounds, it's OK. You can take them off when you go back to normal eating.

When we set unrealistic goals -- we're not going to have one bite of dessert -- and then we cheat, we tend to tell ourselves that we have failed, and now have a free pass to cut loose.

The main thing is not to think you have only two choices: sticking to a strict diet or going off the deep end. Resolve to find a happy medium from the start.

What temptations add up fastest?

Alcohol and sweets. It's no surprise that desserts have a lot of calories, but you may not realize each glass of eggnog probably has about 350 calories. And holiday punch has a ton of sugar.

So what should we drink?

Have a little champagne, which is only 90 calories. Enjoy a glass then switch to a festive cranberry juice or pomegranate juice spritzer.



Guide to Holiday Eating (cont.)

What triggers the binge/deprivation cycle at holiday time?



Of course, family issues are right at the top of the list. Family pressures can feed destructive patterns, such as eating and drinking too much. But people who feel very comfortable in the family setting also find themselves in a situation where it feels natural to overeat and drink. It's tough either way.

Another big problem in the holiday season is being tired from all the running around. People tend to turn to food for energy. That's another big reason why people overeat -- they're looking for a quick pick-me-up. Also, when you're tired, willpower and motivation aren't easy to find.

It helps to acknowledge that it will be difficult. It's really important to remember that you ultimately control your behavior and can find balance. So if you overindulge on the hors d'oeuvres, have a light dinner and avoid a heavy dessert. And if you go way overboard one day, remember it's not the end of the world -- you *can* do things differently tomorrow.

Hermit Spice Bars Makes: About 40 pieces

Consider bringing a plate of these spiced low-fat treats to a holiday gathering. They're a healthy indulgence for a festive time of year.

Ingredients

2 cups white whole-wheat flour or all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup golden or dark raisins
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/3 cup canola oil
1/2 cup packed brown sugar (light or dark)
1/2 cup molasses (light or dark but not blackstrap)
2 large eggs
2 tablespoons decorating sugar

Source: *Healthy Living Kitchens*



Preparation

1. In a mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, salt and spices. Set aside.
2. In a food processor, process raisins and applesauce to a rough paste. Add oil, brown sugar, molasses and eggs: process just to blend.
3. Stir the raisin mixture into the flour mixture. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours.
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. Divide the chilled dough into 4 equal pieces. Transfer one piece of dough to a lightly floured work surface. Shape it into a somewhat flattened 10-inch log. Transfer the log to a baking sheet and repeat these steps with the remaining dough pieces. Sprinkle a narrow line of decorating sugar down the length of each log.
6. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes until the edges are dry and the center looks done. The logs should still be slightly soft in the middle. Let cool on the baking sheets.
7. Cut logs into 1-inch-wide bars. Hermits can be stored in an airtight container for a week or longer.



Nutritional info / serving

87 Calories
2g Fat
0g Saturated fat
0g Trans fat
1g Protein
15g Carbohydrate
2g Fiber
38mg Sodium
18mg Calcium