

Trimming Down On Trimmings

Here we go again. Thanksgiving is here and Christmas will be here before you know it.

Life is suddenly very fast and busy.

Even though we are increasing our physical activity by running from store to store or up and down the attic steps to fetch the “other” Christmas tree, we often offset this depletion in calories by eating more foods with many more calories. More pies, more cakes and much more candy seem to magically appear and not so magically disappear. Don't lose hope, wise choices can still be made. Below are some tips to help.

1. Choose alternative sweeteners. Calories for cakes, pies, candy and just about anything else that has a sweet taste can be cut. The use of sucralose (Splenda®, which also now comes in a store brand) is ideal for baked goods. This product does not change as the temperature rises, therefore when using the “baking formula” can be used cup for cup instead of sugar. Sucralose is also good for folks who need to control their blood sugar. Other sweeteners like Equal® and Sweet-N-Low® do not tend to bake well but are excellent at sweetening products like beverages and non-baked products.

The Holidays are a celebration of the Gift of Life.

Respect that gift by overcoming the temptation of an unhealthy life.

2. Don't let tempting food earn a place in your home.

It seems that the majority of holiday eating is not at the dinner table. Good intentioned friends and neighbors will often “gift” you with a favorite treat, which is far too easy to grab on your way to get that extra set of lights. Get rid of it!!! Donate it to a family that is truly needy or take it to work with you, it will disappear fast!! And save you from loosening your belt.

3. Think outside the box. There are some fantastic recipes that omit fat and substitute with products like applesauce. Sometimes the only characteristic that fat is designed to add to a recipe is moisture and of course the obligatory calories too! However with the appropriate recipe, the difference is not even noticeable. However if you are uncomfortable with that type a change, it is better to choose a healthy fat instead of a clog bursting fat. Peanuts, pecans, avocados, olive oil and canola oil are the healthiest types of fat. These can often times be easily substituted into your favorite recipe. Lard, butter, bacon and sour cream are very efficient at clogging your arteries.

4. Rethink you family traditions. If your family tradition is to be overweight, suffer from many great physical ailments or early death, then do I have the solution for you! Start healthy family traditions. Focus on low fat vegetable dishes for that holiday feast. This should be at least 50% of the offering. Limit the desserts to just 1 and make sure that one has some redeemable qualities like a pumpkin pie, made with sucralose. It is a much more effective show of love for your family when you are actually promoting health instead of inhibiting it. Be the family leader that your family deserves.

5. Balance your life. This means, enjoy your time with your family, but do so with an eye toward health. Eat smaller portions of those foods that can contribute to weight gain or higher blood sugars, like stuffing, mashed potatoes, corn, rolls and cranberry sauce. Choose 1 or 2 of these types of foods and limit that portion. Starches and high fat foods should comprise no more than 25% of your intake.

6. Stay Active. Employ the family in a game of charades after the big meal, do a scavenger hunt or take a simple walk. These types of activities are much more conducive for family fellowship than watching a football game. You can check the scores later. Don't let an unhealthy tradition continue to eat away at your family's health.

Remember: The Holidays are a celebration of the Gift of Life. Respect that gift by overcoming the temptation of an unhealthy life. That is a much more appropriate celebration of such a great gift.