

## The Unwanted Christmas Gift

The good news is that the latest research released in the New England Journal of Medicine shows that people do not gain as much weight over the Christmas period as they think. Participants in this study thought that they had gained at least 2kg during the holiday season, but actually only one in 10 had really put on that much. The average weight gain over the holiday season was 0.4kg.

Dr Jack Yanovski, who led the research, said: "Although an average holiday weight gain of less than a pound may seem unimportant, that weight was not lost over the remainder of the year.

Unfortunately that's the bad news. By the end of the year, volunteers were on average 0.64kg heavier than at the beginning of the year. Most of the yearly weight gain was added during the Christmas period. On average adults gain around 0.5kg each year – the holiday season is where most of this weight gain occurs.



Follow these tips to have fun over the holiday period without piling on the pounds

### 1. Know the facts

The average turkey dinner contains more calories than the average adult needs in an entire day (for many, it's almost double the amount they need in a day).

### 2. Focus on the reason for the season

What is the reason for the season? This holiday keep the primary focus on thankfulness rather than feasting. Enjoy the company. Are you getting together with family and/or friends? Celebrate these relationships. Take pleasure in the conversations. Think of the food as a fringe benefit.

### 3. Eat Slowly

It takes the stomach about 15-20 minutes to signal the brain that it is full. By then, we've usually overeaten, especially during the holidays. Eat slowly, savour every bite. Tell yourself that if you are still hungry 15-20 minutes after you finish what you can have more - again, in moderation

### 4. Eat small portions

Want to taste it all? Then do just that; taste it. Just because you want to enjoy all of the foods served during your family's dinner doesn't mean you need a full serving of each dish. Take enough to allow yourself one or two bites of each item. Serve yourself slightly larger portions of your favourite dishes.

### 5. Eat dessert

Don't skip dessert. If you deprive yourself, you may be setting yourself up for greater temptation and regret. Eat dessert, but take a small portion. Again, savour every bite. When you are done, say "That was delicious!" instead of "I wish I could have more."

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### 6. Drink water

Make sure you always have a glass of water in your hand. Your hands and mouth will be occupied and it will help to fill up your stomach a bit so you don't overeat.

### 7. Limit your alcohol consumption

Alcohol provides "empty calories" and no nutritional value. One day's worth of overindulgence has the potential to cancel out one to two week's worth of workouts. Remember all of that hard work and sweat? Make sure it was worth the effort.

### 8. Eat breakfast

A decent breakfast does wonders to reduce the risk of over-eating later on. Unfortunately, many of us can be tempted to skip breakfast in an attempt to compensate for the food-fest to come. This doesn't work, as going without food early on can increase the risk of us gorging ourselves later on.

