



CHCHD News

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For Immediate Release

November 15, 2011

Let the turkey be the only one stuffed this holiday season

Chattanooga, TN – The holiday season is here and now is the time to begin thinking about how you will stay healthy and active. With so many family gatherings and office parties, temptation is everywhere. According to the American Dietetic Association, Americans gain one to two pounds during the holiday season and those pounds usually stick around after the New Year. The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department offers a few tips to help you stay on track.

"Remember portion sizes," said Jill Heine, health educator at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. "Half of your plate should be non starchy vegetables, for example, leafy greens or broccoli. A quarter of your plate should be lean protein such as turkey or chicken and the other quarter should be your carbohydrates such as bread, mashed potatoes, rice or pasta," recommends Heine.

Eat breakfast and lunch if you are going to have a holiday dinner, don't skip meals and load up at one large meal. You most likely wouldn't do this any other day of the year, so stick to your regular routine.

- Take it easy on drinks and appetizers; many appetizers and alcoholic beverages are heavy in calories, so be mindful of what and how much you are eating
- Limit the amount of snacking and drinking you do before dinner
- Use a small plate instead of hovering and grazing at the snack table
- Before you go back for a second serving, wait 10 minutes to see if you really are still hungry

Take your time and enjoy the meal. "Sometimes the food is so amazingly delicious that we just can't get enough of it and we eat too fast," said Heine. "Slow down, enjoy the food and eat until you feel comfortable and satisfied. It can take up to 20 minutes for the stomach to signal the brain that it is full," Heine added.

Staying active can help you maintain a healthy weight. "Instead of plopping down on the couch and watching the football game, go outside for a walk," Heine recommended. "Get some fresh air and get your blood pumping. This will help stave off that tired sluggish feeling after eating and will give you more energy to socialize and have fun at the holiday gathering," said Heine.

For more nutrition information, visit www.health.hamiltontn.org.

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