



TIPS AND STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON

- **Plan, Plan, Plan:** Plan workouts from now until after the New Year. Enter them in your calendar or create recurring meeting requests, set out work-out clothes the night before, and bring entertainment
- **If you bite it, write it:** It's not everyone's cup of tea, but consider keeping a journal throughout the holidays to keep track of your food intake, exercise, vitamins, and even feelings or emotions through the holidays
- **Relax!** Plan on some relaxing time during other highly-structured, highly-stressful events (yoga, talk with friends, walk, meditate)
- **Dance:** Enjoy the holiday music and events that have dancing opportunities available. Bonus points since it keeps you physically away from the areas with food
- **Stay Hydrated:** Make hydration a priority over the holidays, and make a rule to keep beverages calorie-free! At parties, holding a glass of water in your hand keeps you both hydrated and unable to hold a plate of food!
- **Go Shopping:** Use your time allotted for shopping for gifts as an extra chance to get some movement - walk around the mall or shopping center after you're done shopping!
- **Is it special?** Most of the foods at holiday parties are available year round. If you find a must-have item, take one or two bites and move on. Restricting these special foods often creates guilty-feelings later on.
- **Non-food Traditions:** This time of year is about a lot more than eating! Start food-free traditions in your family like ice-skating, caroling, reading holiday stories, or making holiday crafts.
- **Don't go on empty:** Don't save up all day for one event! Stick to your regular schedule and don't nibble and graze all day/night in anticipation of one big meal or event.
- **Don't drive through:** Don't let the hectic holiday schedule force you to eat fast-food. Plan your meals ahead so you aren't hungry when you are out. Have a list of foods available at restaurants so if you do find yourself out, you have a plan instead of reacting to the environmental cues or emotions.
- **Listen to your body:** Ask yourself if you are actually hungry or if you are eating because the food is there. Are you bored? Depressed? Stressed?
- **Eat Slowly, and CHEW, CHEW, CHEW!** Slowly eating may have fallen off your radar, but really try to pay attention to your hunger and fullness during the holidays.
- **Use a small plate,** and don't fill it up all the way; no seconds!
- **Dress for the occasion!** It is much harder to overeat when you have a slim fitting dress or tight pants reminding you of your weight-loss successes and how great you look and feel!

We all need to remember to focus on the reason for the season - spending time together and being thankful for friends, family and good health! Remember what is really important about the holidays, and use this time to reflect on your reasons for pursuing surgery and a healthier lifestyle.