

Holiday eating

Alternatives to the weight-loss weight-gain roller coaster pattern

Medical Weight Management, a Farmington Hills weight reduction clinic, shares some timely tips about holiday eating.

"The average American gains from four to six pounds over the Thanksgiving-to-New Year holiday season," says Keith Levick, behavioral director for the clinic, which takes a nutrition and education approach to weight management.

The clinic's philosophy is that all food is good food, all calories are good. By educating the patient in proper nutrition and calorie counting of foods and physical activity, weight management is tailored to the individual's lifestyle, rather than forcing the patient to make food choices.

For many Americans, the annual post-holiday crash diet will bring short-lived success and long-term failure.

"MOST AMERICANS believe that in dieting, starch is the enemy and resort to some variation of the low-carbohydrate diet. But this is probably the worst thing they could do," Levick said.

"The major effect of a low carbohydrate diet is short-term water loss. Weight loss during the first week is sharp. But unless the dieter has reduced total caloric intake severely, as well as carbohydrate intake, most of the loss is temporary water fluctuations. The dieter becomes discouraged as the body reabsorbs water, the diet seems restrictive and boring, and they give up, feeling like a failure, and go back to old habits and regain the weight," he said.

AN ALTERNATIVE to the low-carbohydrate diet and its roller-coaster pattern of loss-gain, loss-

gain, is three concrete steps suggested by Levick.

- Learn the caloric content of different foods, especially where the fat is.

- Make enough changes in your habitual food choices to lower your overall caloric intake.

- Increase your level of physical activity.

"You have to learn your own strengths and weaknesses and build a strategy around them. You can still be a snacker, nighttime nibbler, but can learn to eat popcorn instead of nuts, turkey sandwiches instead of salami and cheese," says Levick.

"What most people don't know about food would startle them," says Levick. "The diet-plate served in nearly every coffee shop (hamburger patty, cottage cheese, and peach halves) has 14 times as many calories as a large turkey sandwich with lettuce, tomato, mustard and a side of coleslaw."

Levick believes the typical American diet is comprised of 44 percent fat, much of it hidden. For example

nuts are among the most fattening things with about 800 calories in an eight-ounce serving. That cup of nuts equals 40 cups of unbuttered popcorn.

AT NINE CALORIES a gram, fats are a dieter's real enemy.

"If you consider this while filling your holiday plate you can have your cake, or turkey, potatoes, cranberry sauce and pie and beat the holiday

weight-gain syndrome, too. Here's some guidelines on what to eat, and serve your holiday guests:

- Turkey is much lower in fat than ham. If both are served, opt for the bird and trim away any skin or fat.

- Either skim or skimp on gravy. At 60-70 calories per tablespoon, a generous helping can add 700 calories to your holiday meal. If you put gravy through a strainer, you can cut those calories 75-80 percent.

- Potatoes are likely to contain less fat than stuffing. Baked have fewer calories than mashed, and less than candied sweet.

- Sour cream has 25 percent the calories of butter. A baked potato with a tablespoon of sour cream has 150 calories and lots of vitamins if you eat the skin.

- Pumpkin pie has half the calories of pecan pie. Most of the fat is in the crust, so leave some behind on your plate.

- Instead of the high fat, high-calorie cheesecakes, potato chips or peanuts, try a raw vegetable tray which is an excellent source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

- Most salad dressings are high in fat, and contain little, if any, protein. Tofu dressing can be used to stuff cherry tomatoes or mushrooms, or try low-fat yogurt or low-fat cottage cheese (blenderized).

- Fresh fruit kabobs is another low-calorie, high vitamin and mineral appetizer. For elegance, stick

them into a whole pineapple.

• Instead of stuffing with white bread, use whole wheat or whole

grain bread. Omit the butter and giblets and substitute defatted chicken broth and unpeeled apples.



retirement memos

Margaret Miller

Card game can be a bridge to fun

IT WAS Tuesday, second Tuesday of the month to be exact, and that meant I was going out for lunch and an afternoon of bridge.

For me it was the first bridge Tuesday in several months, since the women in our condominium don't organize games during the summer, and I had had to skip the first fall sessions.

So I read the bridge column in the morning paper and wondered for the umpteenth time why I don't do something about a few bridge lessons or at least an authoritative book for guidance. I answered my own wondering: I just don't think much about the game until second or fourth Tuesday rolls around.

Don't get me wrong — I thoroughly enjoy these Tuesdays. Lunch is always delicious, and it's fun to get together with neighbors. And, sort of by osmosis, my bridge is beginning to improve a bit. One Tuesday last spring, with excellent partners and good cards and a lot of luck, I even won the \$1.50 top prize.

PREPARING to go out, I thought of a recent conversation with several new residents of this area.

"I went to play bridge with my sister-in-law," said one, "but I don't know whether I want to do that again. Those women are out for blood! My sister-in-law never used to play that way."

Another said she taught many casual and occasional bridge players

get super-serious about the game when they retire and have more time and attention to devote to it. I told them that definitely hadn't happened to me and that when I play "I try mainly not to disgrace myself."

That must have struck a responsive chord. Everyone agreed. In spades, of course.

BUT I KNEW there was no problem with the group I enjoy. I had checked that out when I first signed up.

"We have some excellent players in this group," its organizer assured me then, "but nobody takes the playing very seriously."

And so it has been, which is why I continue my socializing and learning experience. The better players are most helpful, and there is good-natured checking of systems. What's more, I'm not alone in making occasional goofs.

And on that second Tuesday lunch was delicious, and the company was fun. The worst thing I did was go down because I got greedy for an extra trick and lost count.

But one of these days I'll make that purchase. A good, simple bridge book.

Margaret Miller was *Suburban Life* editor for *Observer Newspapers* for 16 years. She and her husband, Joe, have retired to Florida, where she writes *Retirement Memos*.



RANDY BOST/Staff photographer

Czech folklore, artifacts on exhibit

Authentic Czechoslovakian folklore and artifacts will be on display Dec. 21 through Friday, Jan. 23 in Madonna College Exhibit Gallery. A 10-year collection of pictures of American-Czechoslovakian natives dressed in costumes depicting three regions in Czechoslovakia will be shown. The display includes native costumes and handicraft items, some dated in the late 1800's.

Several handcut and handblown crystal pieces in the exhibit will be featured. Among the prominent pat-

terns displayed are Thistle, King George and Queen's Lace from the regions of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia.

Other items in the exhibit are pottery dishes, modern ceramics and crystal figurines.

Exhibit Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday; 1-4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

Admission is free. Madonna College is located at 1-96 and Levan Road in Livonia.

Car seats available

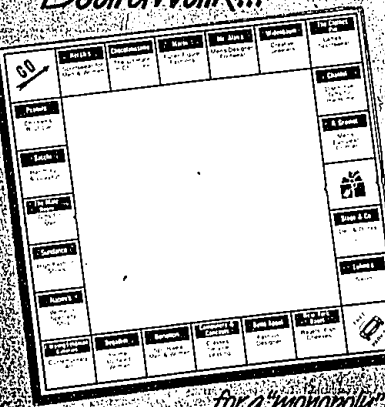
Persons in need of a child or infant seat for the holidays can arrange for

one by contacting the Oakland County Health Division, 858-1394.

Pick an ornament

Michele and Steven Paul, Michael Retanatharhorn, his mother, Joanna, and his brother, Andrew, are all choosing a tag ornament that carries the name and age of a child. They will buy a gift for that child, use the tag on the wrapped gift and place the gift under the tree. Farmington Area Community Women are working in conjunction with Social Services of Oakland County to deliver the gifts in time for Christmas. Trees decorated with the tag ornaments are in Metropolitan Bank of Farmington, 27500 Farmington Road; First Federal Savings and Loan of Farmington, 23220 Farmington Road; Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty; and Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 11 Mile.

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