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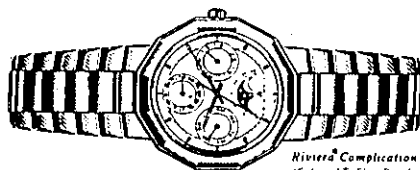
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Tips for healthy holiday feasting

By Debra Lee Baldwin
special writer

IF YOU munch with abandon between now and New Year's, you stand to gain about seven pounds.

So how do you survive the season with your slacks intact? Tiptoe through the temptations, ever alert to paunch-producing foods and libations.

Which is not to say you have to suffer. There are many ways you can (cheerfully, gracefully) avoid culinary pitfalls and enjoy the feasts and festivities ahead.

WHEN YOU'RE THE GUEST

You can vow to avoid high-fat snacks and gooey sweets, but chances are you'll give in when the going gets tough (under the watchful eye of a hostess who slaved all day to please her guests).

Plan in advance; take it easy for a day or so before you go, cutting back on your intake. But don't arrive famished, or you may lose control when you need it most.

When you do indulge, for heaven's sake, enjoy it. Guilt tends to lead to feelings of deprivation, which lead to a binge, and then more guilt — a cycle you're wise to avoid.

Alcohol can sabotage you. Not only is it sky-high in calories, it also can weaken your resolution. If you must imbibe, choose a dry wine instead of a sweet one, or a wine cooler made from wine and seltzer.

Watch out for salty snacks; they make you thirsty, and you tend to drink more. Also, they tend to be high in calories.

Unless you look forward all year to eggnog, you're smart to refuse it. This holiday "treat" can have up to 1,000 calories per cup. (Look for eggnog made

with low-fat milk, available at most supermarkets.)

So how do you survive the season with your slacks intact? Tiptoe through the temptations, ever alert to paunch-producing foods and libations.

When at the buffet, choose carefully then move away. At the dinner table politely refuse seconds (you can protest that it was fabulously delicious, but you're more stuffed than the turkey).

Even though you're busy, plan to visit the fitness center or enjoy your favorite form of exercise frequently during the holidays, especially the day after a party. You'll feel terrific.

Sometimes, inclinations to over-indulge with food or alcohol intensify during the holidays. Don't delay getting help; now may be the best time to join a support group, visit a clinic or make an appointment with a counselor or therapist.

WHEN YOU'RE THE HOST

Thank God for turkey, a low-fat, low-cholesterol meat that forms the main dish of most holiday meals.

Don't sabotage the bird, though, with a bread-and-sausage stuffing chock-full of fats and calories. Make a high-fiber dressing instead, with celery, onions and other vegetables or fruits, plus a base of high-fiber bread or cereal. Or skip the dressing and serve long grain

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