

Ways to Handle Special Occasions

1. Anticipate the event

- Think about what foods and drinks will be served and if you can make requests (i.e., salad dressing on the side, club soda with lime to drink, a lean meat or vegetarian item).
- Plan out how you will spend your fat grams and calories for the day (e.g., “bank”).
- Think ahead about ways to control your calories during the evening (i.e., drinking lots of water, limiting appetizers and desserts, etc.).
- Focus on the non-eating aspects of the event that you enjoy, such as socializing or dancing.

2. Plan pleasures other than food or drink

- Plan the kind of holiday, vacation, or special event that **you want**, and make it healthy!
- Think about what you can do to stay active. Can you make physical activity a part of your holiday, vacation, or special event? A morning or evening walk, swimming laps, or dancing could easily fit the bill.

3. Hold a family meeting ahead of time

- How will we handle food and eating out?
- Can we find a fun way to all be physically active this year?
- Ask your family to agree to encourage you to eat healthy and be physically active.
- Talk about other ways your family can help you maintain your goals.

4. Set reasonable expectations

- Continue to monitor your eating and physical activity.
- Weigh yourself often, if possible. Don't forget that scales differ.
- Plan to **maintain** your weight – it may not be realistic to expect to lose weight during special events.
- Let go a little. Eat something special – choose the best, and have a small portion.

5. Avoid or reduce stress caused by holidays, vacations, or special events

- Avoid trying to please others more than yourself.
- Plan daily times to relax.

6. Decide what to do about alcohol

- Drinking alcohol may lower self-control, making you more likely to eat and drink beyond what you otherwise would.
- If you drink, keep track of the calories you are consuming.

7. Build in ways to be active

- Be a little more active with any extra time you have.
- Park further away and walk when doing holiday errands or sight-seeing.
- Look for seasonal ways to be active that can become traditions, such as visiting parks, window shopping at a brisk pace, or even sledding.

8. Prepare for the personalities and habits of friends and family

- If you have a relative who likes to push food on everyone, or a friend who is constantly refilling your wine glass, mentally prepare for how you will handle the situation.

9. Plan for pleasures *after* holidays, vacations, or special events

- Sometimes after the holidays or special events, people get the “blahs” and lose motivation to continue their healthy habits. In order to help avoid those feelings, plan something to look forward to in the near future (such as a weekend trip in February, or a day spent with friends after a vacation).



Planning Ahead

Despite the challenges, healthy eating and being active **are** possible during holidays, vacations, and special events. The key is to **plan ahead**.

- 1. What problems related to food might come up?**

- 2. Choose one problem. List some ways to handle it.**

- 3. Choose the best solution.**
 - What will you need to do to make that happen?

 - How will you handle things that might get in the way?

- 4. Plan a non-food reward (new item of clothing, time for reading, weekend away) for yourself if you are able to follow your plan.**
 - What will the reward be?

 - What will you need to do to earn that reward?

Reflect On What's Important to You

It is common to neglect healthy eating and physical activity during holidays, a vacation, or a special event. One reason is **too much to do in too little time**.

To help you manage your time, take a minute to **reflect on what's important to you**.

- 1.** Pretend it is **10** years from now. You are thinking about how you spent holidays, vacations, or special events during those 10 years.
 - What memories would you treasure most?

 - What were the most meaningful and enjoyable?

- 2.** List some other activities and traditions that are **NOT** so meaningful or enjoyable (for example, you may send holiday cards every year but not find much meaning or enjoyment in doing so).

- 3.** Think about how the importance of **staying healthy** measures up to how you spend your time. How does this impact your priorities for holidays, vacations, and special events?

Making Time for a Healthy Lifestyle

Think about the following actions and whether or not you have a difficult time continuing them during special occasions.

When I get busy during special occasions, I tend to neglect the following behaviors:

- Keeping track of what I eat
- Keeping track of physical activity
- Doing physical activity
- Cooking low-calorie and low-fat foods
- Planning ahead when I eat out
- Talking back to negative thoughts
- Changing problem cues (food, social, or activity cues)
- Adding helpful cues (food, social, or activity cues)
- Problem solving things that get in the way of my healthy lifestyle goals
- Other (specify):

Some possible ways to MAKE TIME to do the above things:

1. Cut back on these activities that are LESS important to me:
2. Make time for healthy eating/physical activity by (brainstorm):
 - Choose the best solution

What might get in the way? How will I handle this?