



## **22) Tricks to Indulge Healthfully over the Holidays**

Do you start every New Year with a resolution to lose all of the extra weight you gained during the holidays? Do you put yourself on some painful detox program to try to regain your health after over indulging with friends and family? Well as a follow on to my article on mindful eating from last week, I want to share with you some great tips for **enjoying the holidays fully without feeling over full!**

Living a healthy and vibrant life does not mean that you need to feel deprived, especially around the holidays. Enjoying the foods you love with people you love is all part of living a healthy and happy life. The problem sometimes, however, is that we over-indulge in the wrong foods over the holidays which leaves us feeling less than healthy and vibrant.

The following list includes some great and simple tricks that you can use to allow you to enjoy the holidays without the typical harmful side effects:

### **1. Drink Water**

It is amazing how when you are properly hydrated, your metabolism will run smoothly as well as your digestive system and more. When you are thirsty, you tend to crave unhealthy foods such as sweets. Make a point this holiday season to start each day with a glass or two of good quality filtered or spring water and be sure to drink plenty between meals and especially if you are having cravings.

### **2. Chew Slowly**

We discussed mindful eating at length last week as way to help you enjoy your foods in a fulfilling and balanced way. As part of that concept, taking your time to chew your food slowly and completely will enable you to truly taste your food and aid in proper digestion. When we slow down the pace of eating, we will tend to eat less. Eating slowly and deliberately allows your body time to properly signal you to let you know when you are full.

### **3. Choose Wisely as Much as Possible**

If you have been following my articles or videos or attending my classes, you know that I am a huge proponent of eating as many fresh whole plant foods as possible. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and peas etc... have everything you need to be healthy while helping you to feel full and satisfied. Plant foods are naturally low in fat and high in fiber and rich in all the antioxidants and phytonutrients which are key for a healthy body and balanced weight. Try to choose mostly plant foods to fill your plate and enjoy everything else in moderation or as a condiment on the side. You will find that you will feel better and may actually find that you lose weight during the holidays!!!

### **4. Do Not Deprive Yourself of Tastes and Textures You Love**



Completely depriving yourself of your favorite holiday treats is not living in balance. If you try to avoid all foods you crave, you may feel so out of balance that you end up over-indulging at a later time to try to compensate. There is great joy in sharing special foods that are family traditions or holiday favorites. The key is following point number 3 above and enjoying small amounts of other things too.

### **5. Do Not go to an Event Starving**

It is much harder to control what or how much you eat when you are starving. The best way to prevent this is to eat a healthy snack or small meal before you go to a party or restaurant where you know you will be tempted. Snack on some celery and carrots and hummus or a piece of fruit, for example, before leaving home. One of my tricks is to keep a healthy trail mix in my purse or briefcase at all times. That way I always have a good option at my finger tips when hunger strikes and there are no healthy options around.

### **6. Learn to Share!**

Often, when I am at a party or a restaurant and want to try a dessert or appetizer that may be a bit indulgent, I share it with whomever I am with. When we go to out eat as a family, we often order one dessert and ask for multiple forks. You will find that it is only the first few bites that taste good anyway. Beyond that, you've had enough and you really don't taste or even enjoy the remaining bites. And, if you continue eating, you only find yourself feeling over stuffed and wishing you hadn't kept eating. Again, everything in balance is the key to a happy and healthy holiday.

Another trick is to bring a dish to share with the host/hostess and guests. Not only is it a lovely gesture to bring something as a thank you for the invitation, it also gives you an opportunity to make one of your favorite tasty healthy dishes and have it available to eat at the party. That way, you know there will be at least one thing that you can eat and feel good about.

### **7. Don't Aim for 100% Full**

The Japanese have a term called "Hara Hachi Bu" which means eating until you are 80% full. This is one of the reasons why folks in Okinawa Japan are believed to be one of the longest and healthiest living people. Calorie restriction has been found in studies to increase longevity. The key to not feeling deprived while reducing calories is to eat mostly plant foods. Again, plant foods are naturally low in fat and high in fiber. Fat, in any form, is the highest calorie food. The fiber, that is only found in plant foods, keeps you feeling full.

### **8. Watch out for the Extras**

It's extras like condiments and drinks that often take a somewhat healthy meal and make it a calorie nightmare. You may see a beautiful tray of fresh veggies but the high fat/high calorie/high



cholesterol dip is what puts you over the top. This is why in my recipe book **“Fabulous Recipes for Vibrant Health”**, I offer many wonderful dips and dressings that are completely healthy. Some are even thick and “creamy” without the cream. Please learn to try low fat healthier dressings and dips. They are always just as tasty. Also, we tend to add cheese to everything. Learn to hold back on all the extra cheese and you will certainly save yourself from added saturated fat, cholesterol and of course calories.

Drinks are one of the biggest areas of hidden sugar and calories. We tend to pay attention to what we eat but forget that that the glass after glass of soft drinks or alcohol that we are consuming is extremely high in calories. Drink some water with lemon or lime and some green tea and save your extra calories for a small tasting of your favorite treat. Drinks like these will also improve the health of your liver and boost your metabolism.

## **9. Size Really Does Matter!!**

The bigger the plate the more you’ll eat. Try going through the buffet line with a smaller plate and in most cases, you will eat less but still feel full. Your mind will be tricked into thinking you ate a full plate of food (because you actually did!). If the plate is too large, the opposite will happen. You will take more food than you need and you will feel bad leaving food on your plate, so you will eat the whole thing. If all they have are large plates, try eating with your other hand. A friend told me they heard about this trick and tried it. It causes you to eat more slowly which will help you to eat less, feel full sooner, and keep you from going back for seconds.

## **10. Presentation Matters Too.**

We discussed last week about being mindful when eating. That includes taking a moment to enjoy the aromas of the food and how visually appealing it is. Well, when you are eating chips or cooking out of the bag directly, you are not eating mindfully! Research done by a Dr. Wansink showed that we tend to eat double the amount when you rip open the bag and start gobbling. Be sure to take foods out of the container or serving bowl and put a normal size portion on your plate. You will enjoy the food more and will be happy that you did not overdo it.

For healthy recipes, including desserts, to make for the holidays and share with friends, please visit [www.janetmckee.com](http://www.janetmckee.com) and obtain your own copy of **“Fabulous Recipes for Vibrant Health”**.