

## **Tips for maintaining your weight over Christmas**

Christmas is a time when we are prone to putting on weight, we think we will start our diet in the New Year and we usually eat to excess during the holidays often believing that we will have to deprive ourselves when we start that diet and so probably eating more to compensate for that.

I can help you to make changes that will help you to think differently about food over Christmas and therefore maintain your weight.

Before we start, please answer these thought provoking questions. By writing down the answers honestly, you will be more likely to gain an understanding about your habits.

- Do you usually gain weight over Christmas?
- Would you consider this an intention?
- If yes, why is that so?
- How do you feel about this?
- What is so good about Christmas food as opposed to food all year round?
- Why do you think you eat to excess?
- Do you enjoy feeling bloated?
- Do you usually lose all of the Christmas weight during the following year or are you getting heavier each year?
- How do you feel about this?
- Do you plan to diet in the New Year?
- Which diet do you intend to follow?
- Have you followed that diet before?
- Would you like to change?

The lead up to Christmas is very important, we get stressed and we are definitely not in the mood for depriving ourselves. We often start now to use this lead up - be it stressful or social as an excuse to over eat.

By following these simple tips, you will find that you don't have to watch what you eat or deprive yourself. You are not even trying to lose weight, your aim is simply to maintain the weight you are and not gain any. If you do happen to lose weight as a consequence of these changes then that is a bonus.

### **What you can start doing now?**

Start to get into the habit of leaving something on your plate, or a mouthful of that chocolate bar, or just one less biscuit. Small changes now will make a big difference later. If you forget then that's OK, just try it again the next meal. Keep in mind that this year is going to be different.

### **On the day**

I know that not everyone celebrates Christmas on 25<sup>th</sup>, but whichever day is your special one then let yourself go, no-one wants to be watching what they eat that day, so fill your boots or should I say stomachs, let go of guilt and enjoy yourself. But slow down. Taste your food; enjoy the bliss of every delicious mouthful.

With the rest of the time then think carefully about what you want and this is important. Don't feel that because you over ate one day or even two or three that everything is lost. Each day is new and a chance to make the new changes.

### **Quality not quantity**

Always eat what you love first, don't fill up on mediocre food and then have to force down what you really enjoy.

### **Portions are key**

If you reduce your portions, it means that you can eat the same as everyone else, but stop before you get bloated and uncomfortable. If you are hungry later then go back for more. Slow down your eating and have a gap before you accept seconds. It may be tasty but, when it's gone then you are left with that overfull feeling.

Have one mince pie instead of two or three, the same with cake and chocolates. Think about it, do you really need to gorge yourself; these things are available all year round. If you eat this way then there is no feeling of deprivation.

### **Get active**

If someone suggests a walk over Christmas then get up and go in fact suggest a walk yourself. It's good to be able to chill out and relax when you have been so busy, and very tempting to become a couch potato, but a walk is good for you and the more you move your body, the more calories you will burn, the less weight you will gain.

### **Be happy not guilty**

Make sure that whatever you eat over Christmas that you don't feel guilty. The love of food should be a celebration. So eat, drink and be merry. Have a wonderful time and a very positive and exciting New Year.

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