

## Focusing on Your Health Goals this Holiday Season!

The most wonderful time of the year is here again! The holidays can bring great joy, connecting with friends and family, exploring the winter wonderland of Tahoe/Truckee, or cozying up on the couch and watching holiday movie classics. However, if you are like many Americans, this time of year is also associated with stress and choosing unhealthy habits.

With that in mind, we are sharing tips to help support you in your efforts to take better care of yourself so you can fully enjoy the holiday season while feeling good and treating your body well.

### GOALS:

- To help you focus on your health goals from Thanksgiving through the New Year (and, hopefully, beyond!). This can include choosing health-promoting foods, avoiding overeating, staying active, and managing stress. For this challenge, you can use SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) that you intend to track.
  - *REMEMBER*: Most people do the “all or nothing” method and are frustrated when they cannot be successful in achieving their goals.
    - Focus on ACHIEVABLE and RELEVANT goals (these are the two things people seem to forget about most often).

### SNEAK PEEK (some ideas to get started):

- Practice Intuitive Eating:
  - Notice your hunger/satisfaction feelings throughout the day
    - 1) When physically hungry, respond with eating a satisfying meal or snack that includes minimal added sugars and more protein and fiber.
    - 2) Practice on “normal” days so you can better use this skill when out-and-about.
- Set a plan for success:
  - “If you *Fail to Plan*, you are *Planning to Fail*” — Benjamin Franklin
  - FOOD & DRINKS (NUTRITION)
    - 1) Review your calendar a week in advance,
    - 2) Take note of how many meals you will spend at home vs how many you will spend at social events/parties.
    - 3) When you have the opportunity to eat at home, plan your menu in advance to decrease meal prep time (then, if needed, prep a little in advance by cutting vegetables and measuring out ingredients).
    - 4) If you notice you have a lot of events in one week, set SMART goals for how you will handle those:
      - a) Example 1: maybe you plan to eat a full meal at one while at the others you will eat a light meal in advance at home so you can enjoy a few snacks while there.
      - b) Example 2: If you drink alcohol, try limiting yourself to drinking alcohol at 1-2 events per week, or setting goals related to how many drinks you will allow yourself at each.
      - c) Example 3: if you know there are going to be a lot of baked goods and candy in the break room, make sure to bring some healthy snacks with protein and fiber

to help lessen cravings. If you really want candy, grab one or two pieces, and ENJOY eating it, then move on with your day!

- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:
  - 1) Plan and schedule your physical activity.
    - a) If you don't make time for it, it may never happen.
      - Put workouts on your calendar and set up ways to add in small bursts of activity throughout the day.
      - Ideas include:
        - doing squats or stretches in the kitchen while cooking,
        - going to stores instead of shopping online,
        - or doing wall push-ups between each email you send on longer workdays.
    - b) Make it a SMART goal:
      - Example 1: I will do yoga for 20 minutes 3 days per week for the next month.
      - Example 2: I will go for a 15 minute walk on one of my breaks at work, 3 days per week.
- STRESS REDUCTION:
  - 1) There are many different stressors in life, and many that we cannot control, so it is best to focus your energy on the ones you can control.
    - a) Taking as little as 2 minutes per day to close your eyes and breathe,
    - b) Going for walks,
    - c) Sticking to a budget,
    - d) Seeing a counselor if the holidays are a particularly stressful time for you.

Remember, MINDSET is EVERYTHING!

Focus on small SMART goals you know you can achieve, and stay confident in your ability to eat a nutritious diet, exercise, and manage your stress, and you WILL succeed!

*Provided by Brooklyn Dreher, MS, RDN, LD, and Wellness Dietitian at Tahoe Forest Health System. **Schedule an appointment with a Registered Dietitian to create a personalized nutrition plan that works for you! Call the Tahoe Forest Center for Health to schedule today, 530-587-3769.***