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HOW TO EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

Americans spend \$35 BILLION annually on weight loss aids, but the only thing getting thinner may be your wallet. Then there's the holiday season, from Halloween Candy to Thanksgiving Feasts to Christmas Cookies. Some people complain that just looking at cheesecake makes them fat. This actually has some truth to it - scientists have discovered that the sight of food can stimulate insulin production, which encourages fat deposits.

HELP! I'M HUNGRY!

What's a person to do to get through the holidays unscathed? Understanding the toll the holidays can take on major organ systems, like the pancreas (makes insulin), the adrenals (stress glands) and the thyroid (regulates metabolic rate) can really help. These organs are part of the endocrine system in your body. Nutritional deficiencies and other factors can cause imbalances in these systems. By planning ahead and being educated about balancing organ systems, holiday binge eating can be avoided.

PAMPER YOUR PANCREAS

Eating sugary foods and simple carbohydrates (that break down into sugar) kick in an insulin response from the pancreas that eventually lowers the blood sugar further. Continual consumption of sugar will beat up your pancreas. Controlling eating habits has a lot less to do with will power than it does with blood sugar. When blood sugar drops, the brain, which depends on sugar, or glucose, for its fuel, demands immediate satisfaction. The body signals that it is ravenously hungry, and food intake must increase. Balancing blood sugar and preventing this "dip" helps to create a feeling of fullness and well being, as opposed to a feeling that you need more and more sweets to calm the craving. Proper eating habits and exercise will help regulate blood sugar. Fasting is not a good idea! It will only lower the blood sugar and trigger overeating. Protein can help balance blood sugar. Also, when people cut down on carbohydrates, those who are sensitive to wheat and dairy

(a large number of people!) wind up eliminating a big source of their allergies. Food allergies alone can cause inflammation and weight gain. Drinking liquid protein shakes can be beneficial on several levels. The protein balances the insulin response - plus substituting a shake for high fat, sugary choices can cut down on caloric intake. Additionally, studies have shown that the calories consumed in liquid form satisfy your hunger and calm the appetite more than the same amount of calories taken in solid form.

ADRENAL ANYONE?

Holiday stress depletes the adrenal glands, which in turn decreases your ability to handle stress. Avoid the temptation to induce a false sense of energy with caffeine-laden drinks - caffeine is to the adrenals what sugar is to the pancreas: it only makes the situation worse and weakens the gland. Stress, and turning to "comfort foods," can add up to increased pounds over the holidays. Be kind to your adrenals. Help relieve stress by practicing good dietary and exercise habits.

THINK ABOUT YOUR THYROID

The thyroid gland controls the metabolic rate for almost every cell in the body. Low activity of the thyroid can be responsible for a low rate of burning calories. Many things can drain the thyroid, including mercury release from dental amalgams. Mercury interferes with key thyroid enzymes and upsets the balance of this key endocrine gland.

REDUCE THE GAIN

The endocrine system has a profound effect on weight balance. The three endocrine organs discussed in this article need to be balanced for proper weight control. When metabolic corrections are made, it will help balance your weight. Pay attention to these areas during the holidays (and all the time!) for optimal results in beating weight gain.

THINK NUTRITION FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

There is no better way to rejuvenate your health than by eating more nutritiously. In fact, even a few simple changes in your diet and lifestyle can have a positive impact on your health—and can also prevent a variety of health problems in the future. The holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends. Focus on a healthy balance of food, activity, and fun.

