

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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**LOCAL DIET DOCTOR OFFERS TIPS
FOR HOLDING OFF THOSE HOLIDAY POUNDS**

WASHINGTON, DC--Dr. Arthur Frank, the medical director of The George Washington University Weight Management Program, has some advice for his patients on how to survive the joyous but often "pound painful" holiday season: ***Don't even think about losing weight; just focus on how fantastic you'll feel if you can get through this difficult period without gaining anything.***

Dr. Frank's tips for holding off those holiday pounds are:

1) Don't eat standing up. Since you're standing most of the time at most holiday parties, it will be useful to apply this seemingly innocuous rule. When you're standing, eating is almost an incidental activity to which you pay less attention. If you sit down to eat, you will be more attentive to what--and how much--you're consuming.

2) Swear by your silverware. Try your best to stay away from anything you can eat without a fork or spoon. Those infamous "finger foods" tend to be high in calories plus you tend to be less aware of just how much you're consuming when you're simply grabbing a handful of goodies off a tray.

3) Your mother is not there and her mandate to clean your plate no longer applies. It is ok to have leftovers. If this offends your familial tradition, or if it happens that your mother is there, or if the leftovers are really going to the homeless shelter after the party, the best and most prudent alternative is to put less on your plate.

4) No one will notice what you're eating. Don't feel any pressure to eat because of the occasion or any obligation to eat Aunt Bertha's fruitcake. Unless it is a sit down dinner (in which case the hostess will notice what everyone is eating) no one cares what you have on your plate, no less how much of it you actually consume.

5) Ditto for drinking. You can manage quite well without a drink in your hand and if you are convinced otherwise, a glass of water or a diet beverage will do just as well as a glass of alcohol, particularly if it is in the same shape container. Alcohol does have a substantial effect on your judgement insofar as caloric and other kinds of behavior are concerned.

DR. ARTHUR FRANK
"TIPS FOR HOLDING OFF
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6) Free food is not really free. Consider, at the least, the cost in calories. The notion that you might as well eat it since it is free is a very short sighted analysis of the consequences of the event.

7) Do not depend on New Year's resolutions. Your own experience should convince you that these are almost useless. You should not be that naive again this year. For once, just this once, see if you can manage the problem by avoiding it rather than by the heroic efforts to recover later.

8) Bank calories. If you know you're in for a big weekend, it is better, and far easier, to save calories in advance than to try to catch up on Monday morning. Besides, the effort of banking the calories in advance has a simple sobering impact on your ability to pay attention while you are participating in an otherwise festive occasion.

9) Don't stop exercising. Yes, it has now gotten cold and dark but your commitment to exercise has been substantial and your determination to continue has to be sustained. You have to establish an exercise program that does not depend on good weather, light or dark and safety considerations. If time constraints exist, cut down the duration of the exercise but, at all costs, do not stop.

10) Weigh yourself daily. Same time, same scale and same conditions. It will be a lot easier if you deal with it now rather than later when the magnitude of the problem is more severe. It is easier to cope with a few pounds today than five or ten next week or on January 2. Daily weights compel your attention to the problem and sadly, you do need to pay attention.

11) Recover quickly. Don't wait until January 2, or Monday morning or even tomorrow. If things have gotten a bit out of control, the best time to recover is now. The effort is enormous but the benefits are substantial.