



Dr. Bankole's 5 Tips to Avoid Holiday Overindulgence **December 20, 2007**

With the holidays come festive holiday gatherings centered on five course meals with rich, decadent desserts to follow. It's a time where we enjoy friends and family but also partake in free and spontaneous eating resulting to excessive caloric consumption, and weight gain rarely shed after the holiday binge. This ultimately increases our risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Just a bit of mindfulness will allow you to both enjoy the warm and wonderful flavors of holiday meals without major dietary transgressions. Here's how:

1. **Keep healthy eating tenets in mind.** Don't relinquish healthy eating habits because of a holiday feast. For instance still strive for seven or more servings of fruit and vegetables by serving yourself a healthy portion.
2. **Don't taste everything.** Suppress the curiosity to know what every unfamiliar food tastes like. Each sample brings unnecessary calories from fat and sugar and will take you further from your health goals.
3. **Take 10 before having "seconds."** The sensation of fullness is recognized after hormones signal our brain that the stomach is distended with food. This signal has a lag time of about ten minutes. Jump up too fast for "seconds" and you circumvent this message. Now you're "stuffed!"
4. **Go for a stroll.** Before or after your meal, grab a few friends and family members for nice 30 minute walk outside for some exercise and fresh air.
5. **Prepare a heart smart meal.** Search for meals and recipes that call for more vegetables, and less cholesterol and saturated fat. You can even alter your favorite recipes to lower to amount of butter, lard, or shortening for healthier options. For example reduce the amount of sugar in your dessert by 1/3 to 1/2 the portion.