Eating Healthy and Exercising During the Holiday Season

The holiday season is a joyful time to spend with friends and family, but staying on track with your wellness goals can be difficult this time of year. This handout will give you some helpful tips on how to enjoy the holiday season while still eating healthy and exercising.

ENJOYING YOUR FAVORITE FOODS

During the holidays, there are parties with friends, celebrations at school and family gatherings where sweets and high-fat dishes are served. Indulging once in a while is not too bad, but eating too much can lead to unhealthy weight gain.

Here are some tips for enjoying your favorite foods during the holiday season:

- **Watch your portion size**
  Portion control is important. Use a small plate when you eat holiday meals. More than half of your plate should be filled with healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables. Then, serve yourself a few mouthfuls of your favorite foods instead of a large portion.

- **Look at all of the dishes being served before serving yourself**
  This will help you decide which dishes look and taste the best. Only serve yourself what looks good. Sitting farther away from the buffet table can also help if you feel tempted.

- **Savor every bite**
  Take small bites and eat slowly so you enjoy your food more. This will help you know when your body has had enough and when your stomach is filled.

STAYING ACTIVE

The holiday season can be a difficult time to exercise for many reasons. The colder weather makes it harder to get outside and this time of year can be busy for families, leaving little time for exercise. People also tend to overindulge in comfort foods, which can make it harder to maintain other healthy habits like physical activity.

Here are some tips for exercising during the holiday season:

- **Break your exercise time into small pieces**
  This is helpful when you are short on time. Instead of exercising for 1 hour a day, try exercising for 20 minute intervals, 3 times a day. You can also schedule exercise into your calendar like you would an appointment.

- **Exercise at home**
  On days when the weather makes it difficult to get outside or to the gym, you can exercise at home. There are many fitness apps available for your laptop, smartphone or tablet. You can also find fitness videos online to follow along with.

- **Set small, reachable goals**
  Reaching small goals will help you stay motivated. After you reach a goal, set another one. You’ll feel more confident and motivated to keep pushing yourself.

- **Try for excellence, not perfection**
  It’s okay if you miss a day of exercise! Try setting 1 of those small goals to get back on track and a missed day won’t turn into a missed month.

Focus on maintaining your weight instead of losing weight during the holidays. That way, you can still enjoy your favorite treats without losing sight of your fitness goals.

Focus on maintaining the fitness goals you’ve already started instead of on fitness gains. This way, you can enjoy the holidays without getting off track with your fitness goals.