

Mental Floss

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HOLIDAY EATING BONANZA BEGINS!!!

By Dr. Gary Calhoun

THE HOLIDAYS ARE HERE AND FOR MANY OF US THIS REPRESENTS CHALLENGES REGARDING EATING AND WEIGHT CONTROL. DR. SUSAN AND I REFER TO THE PERIOD FROM THANKSGIVING TO NEW YEARS AS THE EATING SEASON.

THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO LIMIT OR MAYBE EVEN PREVENT WEIGHT GAIN OVER THE HOLIDAYS. YOU WILL BE TEMPTED WITH NUMEROUS PARTIES, EVENTS, AND INCREASED FOOD ADVERTISING. HERE ARE SOME TIPS THAT YOU MAY FIND USEFUL AS YOU GO THROUGH THIS HOLIDAY EATING SEASON.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO A PARTY OR EVENT WITH A SUPPORTIVE SIGNIFICANT OTHER, WORK AS A TEAM TO HELP SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN STICKING TO A REASONABLE EATING PLAN.

REMEMBER TO EAT SLOWLY. THIS IS A SIMPLE TIP, BUT A
continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Holiday Eating Bonanza Begins
- 1** The Holiday Blues
- 2** The Holiday Eating cont'd.
- 3** Holiday Blues cont'd.
- 4** Tips For Stepfamilies and Traveling Families

THE HOLIDAY BLUES

By Dr. Susan Calhoun

THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY MANY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE WHAT HAS BECOME KNOWN AS THE HOLIDAY BLUES.

THE HOLIDAYS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE A TIME OF JOY AND HAPPINESS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE HOLIDAYS OFTEN CAN BE A TIME OF STRESS AND LONELINESS. THERE IS ALWAYS THE PRESSURE TO FEEL JOYFUL AND MERRY. THE HOLIDAYS CAN BRING UP SAD MEMORIES OF PAST HOLIDAYS. OFTEN IT IS AROUND THE HOLIDAYS THAT WE MISS MOST THE ONES WE HAVE LOST. WITH SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON THE COMMERCIAL ASPECTS OF THE HOLIDAYS THIS CAN OFTEN BE A TIME OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AND PRESSURE.

THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT OR AT LEAST LESSEN THE HOLIDAY BLUES.

TRY TO AVOID THE TRAP OF TRYING TO MAKE EVERY HOLIDAY BETTER THAN THE LAST. MAKE EACH HOLIDAY SEASON UNIQUE AND REMEMBER THAT NO TWO HOLIDAYS WILL EVER BE THE SAME.

CREATING YOUR OWN TRADITIONS CAN BE A WONDERFUL WAY TO AVOID REFLECTING SADLY ON PAST HOLIDAYS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN OUR COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF OUR GREAT NUMBER OF TRANSPLANTS. FOCUSING ON HOW WE DID IT BACK HOME CAN OFTEN LEAD TO FEELINGS OF SADNESS. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THOSE NEWLY MARRIED OR RECENTLY DIVORCED. RECOGNIZE THAT LIFE IS FOREVER CHANGING.

KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS MANAGABLE SO YOU ENJOY WHAT YOU DO AND NOT RESENT BEING OVERWHELMED WITH OVER COMMITTING YOURSELF OR YOUR FAMILY. PRIORITIZE WHAT IS TRULY IMPORTANT TO YOU AND ELIMINATE THE REST. LEARN TO SAY "NO THANK YOU"!

continued on page 3

HOLIDAY EATING, CONT'D.

VERY POWERFUL WAY TO DECREASE CALORIE CONSUMPTION. FOCUS MORE ON TALKING AND VISITING WITH FRIENDS THAN THE FOOD.

DO NOT LINGER AROUND THE BUFFET OR TABLES LOADED WITH FOOD. IT IS TOO EASY TO NIBBLE WHILE TALKING AND ALL THOSE LITTLE CALORIES ADD UP TO UNWANTED POUNDS.

PORTION CONTROL IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEM AREAS DURING THE HOLIDAYS. YOU CAN KEEP THOSE PORTION SIZES IN CHECK WITH A COUPLE OF SIMPLE RULES. FIRST, ALWAYS LOOK BEFORE EATING. IT IS EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP IN CONVERSATION AND NOT PAY ATTENTION TO THE AMOUNT OF FOOD ON YOUR PLATE. SECOND, USE THE SMALLEST BOWLS AND PLATES AVAILABLE. YOU WILL SEEM TO HAVE MORE FOOD AND PORTION CONTROL IS MUCH EASIER.

DID YOU KNOW THAT BEING FASHIONABLY LATE CAN BE GOOD FOR THE WAIST LINE AND FIGURE? WHEN IT IS POSSIBLE TRY TO SKIP THE FOOD PORTION OF EVENTS. ALERT YOUR HOST/HOSTESS THAT YOU WILL BE ARRIVING LATE. SHOWING UP AT AN EVENT LATE WHEN MOST OF THE FOOD IS GONE OR ONLY THE LESS DESIRABLE FOOD IS STILL AVAILABLE WILL HELP YOU RESIST TEMPTATION AND KEEP THAT WEIGHT IN CHECK.

ARRIVE WITH FOOD IN YOUR BELLY. TRY TO NEVER ARRIVE AT AN EVENT ON AN EMPTY STOMACH. WHEN POSSIBLE EAT AT HOME BEFOREHAND OR EAT A HEALTHY SNACK ON THE WAY TO THE EVENT. THIS IS THE SAME PRINCIPLE AS NEVER GOING GROCERY SHOPPING ON AN EMPTY STOMACH. AT THE VERY LEAST DRINKING A BIG BOTTLE OF WATER BEFORE FACING THAT VAST ARRAY OF HOLIDAY FOOD CAN HELP YOU CONTROL THE AMOUNT OF FOOD YOU WILL CONSUME.

IF THE PARTY IS AT YOUR HOUSE, BEFORE THE LAST GUESTS LEAVE SEND THOSE LEFTOVERS OUT THE DOOR. BE A GRACIOUS HOST AND SEND THOSE LEFTOVERS HOME WITH YOUR GUESTS. ON THE OTHER HAND IF YOU ARE THE GUEST RESIST ALL ATTEMPTS BY YOUR HOST IN ACCEPTING ANY LEFTOVERS. IF THE FOOD IS AVAILABLE THERE IS ALL LIKELIHOOD THAT IT WILL BE CONSUMED!

YOU MUST BE ON HIGH ALERT REGARDING ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. AS WE ALL KNOW DRINKING AND DRIVING NEVER MIX. YOU WOULD NEVER WANT YOUR MEMORIES OF THE HOLIDAYS TO CENTER ON A TRAGIC ALCOHOL RELATED EVENT.

ALCOHOLIC DRINKS ARE ALWAYS HIGH IN CALORIES, BUT HOLIDAY DRINKS TEND TO BE PARTICULARLY HIGH IN EMPTY CALORIES. ALCOHOL ALSO LOWERS YOUR INHIBITION AND JUDGMENT. WHEN YOUR INHIBITION IS LOW YOU ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO MAKE POOR FOOD CHOICES AND PORTION CONTROL IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. YOU WOULD BE AMAZED AT THE AMOUNT OF CALORIES THAT CAN BE CONSUMED IN A VERY SHORT TIME UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

DURING THE HOLIDAYS WE OFTEN HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY CERTAIN FOODS THAT ARE ONLY AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. YOU DON'T NEED TO DENY YOURSELF THESE SPECIAL TREATS. THE IDEA IS TO ENJOY, BUT NOT OVERLY INDULGE. THE TEMPORARY ENJOYMENT OF THESE SPECIAL TREATS IS RARELY GREATER THAN THE DISPLEASURE YOU FEEL WHEN THE CLOTHES GET TIGHTER AND THE SCALE GOES UP.

WHILE THE FOOD INDUSTRY TRIES TO MAKE THE HOLIDAYS ALL ABOUT FOOD NEVER FORGET THAT THE TRUE JOY OF THE HOLIDAYS IS ABOUT FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. WHEN ATTENDING HOLIDAY EVENTS KEEP THE FOCUS ON ENJOYING THE COMPANY OF OTHERS. MAKE ENJOYING THE COMPANY YOUR PRIMARY FOCUS AND FOOD A DISTANT SECOND.

THIS IS THE TIME OF YEAR WHEN YOU HAVE TO BE VERY CAUTIOUS ABOUT EMOTIONAL EATING. THIS IS EATING IN RESPONSE TO STRESS, LONELINESS, ANGER, DEPRESSION, ETC. THE HOLIDAYS AND SOCIAL GATHERINGS CAN LEAD TO AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF EMOTIONAL EATING. THE STRESS OF THE HOLIDAYS AND THE VAST AMOUNT OF AVAILABLE FOOD MAKES EMOTIONAL EATING EASIER AND MORE LIKELY THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME OF THE YEAR.

FINALLY, IF YOU DO SLIP UP RESIST BEATING YOURSELF UP. RECOGNIZE THE SLIP FOR WHAT IT IS AND QUICKLY MOVE ON WITH A LESSON LEARNED!

THANKSGIVING

TRY TO KEEP IN MIND THAT THANKSGIVING IS ABOUT SHARING...

"HAPPINESS IS NOT SO MUCH IN HAVING AS SHARING. WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET, BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE" NORMAN MACEWAN

THIS THANKSGIVING MAKE YOUR LIFE BY SHARING

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IN THE NEWS...

DR. GARY CALHOUN WILL BE JOINING THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF BARIATRIC SURGEONS AS AN AFFILIATE MEMBER STARTING IN JANUARY 2005.

DRS. SUSAN & GARY CALHOUN ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT THEY WILL BE CONTINUING THEIR FREE SUPPORT GROUP FOR WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY PATIENTS INTO THE YEAR 2005.

NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER WILL PROVIDE TIPS ON HOLIDAY SHOPPING FOR CHILDREN.

HOLIDAY BLUES, CONT'D.

THIS CAN BE A TIME OF YEAR WHEN FINANCIAL STRESS CAN SIMPLY RUIN YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON. SEEK OUT ACTIVITIES THAT ARE FREE, SUCH AS BUILDING SEASONAL DECORATIONS AS A FAMILY OR COUPLE, DRIVING AROUND AND ADMIRING THE DECORATIONS, OR ATTENDING COMMUNITY HOLIDAY EVENTS. ESTABLISH A BUDGET AND STICK TO YOUR BUDGET. DO NOT FALL INTO THE TRAP OF SPENDING SO MUCH THAT YOU WILL DREAD PAYING FOR IT IN THE COMING MONTHS.

FOCUS ON SPENDING TIME WITH PEOPLE YOU LIKE AND THAT ARE SUPPORTIVE. THIS CAN BE A PERFECT TIME TO REACH OUT AND RECONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS. OUR LIVES ARE OFTEN SO BUSY THAT IT IS EASY TO LOSE CONTACT WITH THOSE WE CARE ABOUT AND WHO BRING US JOY. AVOID INVITING PEOPLE TO YOUR HOME OUT OF OBLIGATION. THE TEMPORARY GUILT YOU FEEL WILL NOT MEASURE UP TO THE MUCH LONGER FEELING OF RESENTMENT YOU WILL FEEL.

REMEMBER THAT THIS IS THE HOLIDAY SEASON SO DO NOT PLACE TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE ON ONE DAY OR ONE EVENT. WHEN WE PUT ALL THE EMPHASIS ON THAT ONE DINNER, GATHERING, OR PARTY THE REALITY CAN SELDOM LIVE UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS.

DURING ALL THE RUSH OF HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF. A HOLIDAY SEASON IS LIKE A DISTANCE RACE - YOU HAVE TO PACE YOURSELF. DON'T HESITATE TO DELEGATE AND TAKE HELP WHEN IT IS OFFERED. THIS CAN BE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR WOMEN, WHO OFTEN TAKE ON ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING THE HOLIDAYS FOR THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES.

VOLUNTEER AT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH OR A FAVORITE CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION. VOLUNTEERING ALMOST ALWAYS MEANS YOU RECEIVE MUCH MORE THAN YOU GIVE. THE FEELINGS YOU GET FROM VOLUNTEERING WILL OFTEN REMIND YOU OF WHAT HAVING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT IS ALL ABOUT.

KEEP IN MIND THAT FEELING SAD OR LONELY CAN BE NORMAL FEELINGS EVEN DURING THE HOLIDAYS. NEVER FEEL GUILTY FOR NOT FEELING LIKE YOU "SHOULD" DURING THE HOLIDAYS. REMIND YOURSELF OF WHAT YOU HAVE RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON WHAT IS MISSING. IF ALL ELSE FAILS KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON TOO SHALL PASS.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

HOLIDAY TIPS FOR STEPFAMILIES

- BE SENSITIVE TO YOUR CHILDREN'S NEEDS TO BE WITH EACH BIOLOGICAL PARENT. DO NOT TAKE THEIR NEEDS TO SEE THE NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT PERSONALLY AS IT IS A NATURAL NEED.
- TAKE SOME TIME TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE ABSENCE OF YOUR CHILDREN.
- ADJUST YOUR EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE HOLIDAYS. DO NOT FALL INTO THE TRAP OF EXPECTING A BRADY BUNCH HOLIDAY.
- MAKE IT EASY FOR YOUR CHILD TO CONTACT YOU IF THEY ARE AWAY VISITING. YOU CAN PROVIDE THEM A PHONE CARD AS A SIMPLE WAY TO CONTACT YOU DURING THEIR ABSENCE.
- WORK TO CREATE NEW TRADITIONS THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THE STEPFAMILY.
- PROVIDE YOUR CHILD A PHOTO OF YOU TO TAKE ON THEIR TRIP.
- TRY TO COORDINATE GIFT GIVING TO AVOID DUPLICATION.

HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIPS

- IF TRAVELING AS A COUPLE TO VISIT INLAWS FOR THE FIRST TIME RENT A NEARBY HOTEL ROOM FOR A SAFE PLACE TO ESCAPE AND DECOMPRESS.
- COUPLES CAN DEVELOP A SECRET SIGNAL FOR WHEN THEY MUST ESCAPE.
- SCHEDULE SOME OUTINGS TO NEARBY ATTRACTIONS TO BREAK THE ROUTINE.
- IF VISITING YOUR PARENTS AVOID THE TRAP OF FALLING INTO OLD CHILDHOOD WAYS OF INTERACTING WITH FAMILY.
- IF TRAVELING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN ALLOW THEM TO BRING ALONG A FAVORITE COMFORTING TOY.
- TAKE ALONG SNACKS AND GAMES TO KEEP KIDS BUSY DURING TRAVEL DELAYS.
- BE ORGANIZED SO YOU ARE NOT RUSHING TO THE AIRPORT.
- BUILD IN EXTRA TRAVEL TIME WHEN TRAVELING BY CAR TO REDUCE THE STRESS BY AVOIDING RUSHING.