

PRESS ARTICLE

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The Ultimate Holiday Weight Loss Guide

As we enter the wonderful holiday season with big smiles spread across our cheerful faces, we look forward to a season filled with pleasant family gatherings, festive parties and holiday shopping. Do you know what all these enjoyable holiday festivities and events have in common? Food, food, and you guessed it, more food! Generally we exit the glorious holiday season with a thinner wallet and a bigger bulge spread across our waistlines.

Why is that? We turned to one of Arizona's most recognized and leading weight loss doctors, Dr. Suzanne Bentz, for answers on this difficult subject. Dr. Bentz, who is a Diplomate of the American Board of Bariatric Medicine, which deals with the treatment of obesity and related diseases, personally deals with hundreds of patients weekly, many who were once plagued by the "Holiday Weight Gain" problems. Many of Dr. Bentz's patients have lost over 100 lbs and have successfully avoided gastric bypass surgery, all with out turning into a holiday-hermit by avoiding people, food and parties all together during the holiday season... And you can too!

Dr. Bentz explains, "Holidays are fun, filled with joy, overflowing with many heart-felt gifts, and most importantly, jam-packed with scrumptious fruitcake, pumpkin pie, plum pudding and delectable sugar cookies stacked high with colored icings and sprinkles. Not to mention bucketfuls of creamy eggnog, mugs brimming with hot chocolate, and don't forget the champagne and sparkling cider toasts at all those holiday celebrations. Its all the food temptations that led to the expanding waistlines during the holiday season." Is it any wonder why people tend to gain so many extra holiday pounds? Could lack of self-control around all those delectable

foods be the explanation why we tend to gain weight during the holiday season?

Here are some sure signs that Dr. Bentz believes can contribute significantly to weight gain during the holidays:

Preoccupation. When we are in a crowd, such as mingling with family, friends, or at the office holiday party, we get preoccupied with our conversations. We usually chat near the feasting table. We pick up a tiny plate of cheese and crackers here, and a small sugar cookie there, and a few glasses of sugary but tasty spiced apple cider punch, and before you know it, we've consumed more calories in our "snacking" than what is considered healthy for the entire day. We then top off our "light snacking" with a giant juicy turkey leg and a heaping mound of mashed potatoes swimming in thick gravy. Before we realize what's happened, we've eaten quite a bit of food! Even worse, we didn't even get to enjoy it, because we were so absorbed in the conversations, or nervous or busy with our talking, that we didn't realize we were eating! We must be alert to anything that may trigger overeating and self talk our way out of the situation. Yes, we have to use the lost art of "self-control" during this time of tremendous food temptations, so as not to over indulge.

Obligation. Friends and relatives sometimes insist that you at least try their tasty holiday concoctions, and if you don't, they will certainly be offended. It's amazing how many calories that Great Aunt Mary's spiced bread can pack into one innocent bite! Be on guard! You have an obligation to yourself and to your waistline to watch what you put into your mouth. Sure, if you should refuse to taste-test Great Aunt Mary's goodies for her, she'll pout, after all, she did bake it in love, but at least you know you did the right thing for your health's sake. If all fails and you have no other option than to try the dish, then do so with discretion, and only take one small taste, not an entire plate full.

Recreation. The holiday season in Arizona boasts amazing weather for outdoor activities, such as hiking, biking, walking or even just going to the park to shoot a round of hoops. But, how many times do we busy Valley Natives actually take time to have fun? Chances are, if you are like most, the answer is, "not that often." Oh sure, we can sneak in a light work out once a week or a few times a month, but that's not enough! Recent studies conducted by the Mayo clinic reported that healthy adults should get at least 30 minutes of light to moderate exercise most days, and at least some sort of strength building exercises at least three times per week. That means that if we did what the experts recommend we would be active

daily. Take time out of your hectic holiday schedule and have some fun! You'll feel better and look better too!

Now that we've decided NOT to gain extra weight this holiday season, we can take additional steps to actually get into shape and lose those unwanted pounds. Here are five steps to help you gain control over your weight.

STEP 1 to Permanent Weight Loss: State what you want to achieve in the next month and make sure it is achievable.

For example, "I want to lose 50 pounds" is not honestly achievable by any normal person, but perhaps 5 or 10 pounds would be a great monthly goal for you. Over all you may want to lose a total of 50 pounds, but breaking it up into mini-goals will help you stay on track and motivated. Focus on what you want, how you want to feel, what you want to experience, and imagine hearing these things, feeling these things, and being that new lighter person. Many weight loss professionals suggest staying positive and focusing on your goals.

STEP 2 to Permanent Weight Loss: Decide which habit to change first and then move down your list.

If you're like most people, it's likely you have more than one habit to change. From chocolate binges, to junk food cravings, to even a carb-oholic appetite, you can change your diet by focusing on eliminating one bad habit at a time.

To lose weight, your life and enjoyment doesn't have to end. You just eliminate those things that rob you of your quality of life. For example, do you eat pizza every Friday night? What if you ate it only one or two Fridays a month? Many weight loss experts explain that the key here is to ask yourself what can you notice in yourself that you can change in your regular eating habits now? Gradually cutting back on quantity, slowly introducing other new healthy foods (such as an apple when you want a crunchy food), and modifying what you prefer to eat is a far better approach for long-term weight loss and a great way to develop a new eating style that works for you and that you can live with.

STEP 3 to Permanent Weight Loss: Move it to lose it!

Many weight loss experts suggest that adding regular exercise into your life helps enormously, because the more active you are, the more calories you burn. Muscle tissue requires calories, fat does not. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn just sitting there. Decide what you might do, when you'll do it, and how often. Do you need equipment, books,

tapes, shoes, or can you just get started and walk out your front door and around the block? By adding physical activity into your life, you will enhance your weight loss efforts.

STEP 4 to Permanent Weight Loss: Create your very own weight loss plan.

Most weight loss experts can't stress it enough that each person is unique in their physical make up and therefore will lose weight individually. There is NO one size fits all when it comes to weight loss. It is suggested that you start by first listing your individual weight loss goal or milestone you want to achieve, and then visit with an experienced weight loss doctor who can help you answer the question of how you will achieve it. Your personal plan may include a variety of subjects from diet reduction or restriction, to hormone therapy, to addition of supplements and vitamins, to a strict exercise program, to testing you for food allergies that may be causing weight gain, and to even including emotional support groups and personal coaching. Remember, everyone is beautifully unique and will require his or her own individual weight loss plan.

STEP 5 to Permanent Weight Loss: Get started on your new plan for long-term weight loss.

Today is the best day to start getting healthy. You will never be as young or ready as you are right now. The key to success is to first start.

Here are some small tips and ideas to help you get started and to stick to your new weight loss plan:

- 1) Carry a small notebook for tracking eating to help you and your doctor get a clear picture of what you are eating and where you might make small changes if necessary.
- 2) Track your exercise minutes, even if it's only 10 minutes a day, on a monthly calendar.
- 3) Educate yourself on as much information about living and eating healthy. Visit the library or order books online for new health and exercise ideas.
- 4) Buy and eat healthy foods. Always have fruits, cut up vegetables and lean protein options on hand. Visit different grocery stores and markets to see what's available.

5) Seek medical help if you are not seeing the results you need. Maintaining the ideal body weight is important for good health, increased life expectancy, and a positive self-image. It's an issue that many people struggle with, but the good news is there are a number of weight loss programs and doctors that can help. Find a program that works best for you, and know when to contact a medical weight loss professional who can help overcome the more difficult obstacles. With some focus, effort, and professional help, you can succeed!

The holidays are officially here. Why not give yourself and your family the gift of a healthy, new, trimmer you this season? The best time to start is now! Initiate working towards your goals with your new weight loss plan. Don't wait for the next full moon or some other arbitrary starting date. Just get started, and stick to your plan. Remember, the sooner you start, the sooner you begin to see results!

For more information about the different options available for medical supervised weight loss, or to view the many options of individualized weight loss programs offered, visit www.redmountainweightloss.com.

By: Christina Jordan

Christina Jordan is a writer and the Marketing and Public Relations Director over all the Red Mountain Med Spas and Red Mountain Weight Loss practices across Arizona. She has a strong passion for educating others about weight loss as she has personally lost over 75 pounds and slimmed down from a dress size of 20w to a dress size of 6 in less than a year on the Red Mountain Weight Loss program.

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