

## Healthier Living for the Holidays

As the holiday season begins many people are already gearing up for New Year's resolutions and other long term health goals. Whether you are planning on beginning a diet geared toward weight loss or resuming a previous regimen now is the best time to try out your options. One of the biggest obstacles to a successful weight loss program is a natural desire to do too much too soon. Fortunately there are simple, tried and true methods to greatly improve the chances of achieving your goals.



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There are many words that get thrown around while researching healthy eating. A “superfood” diet is one of the more common descriptions, but what exactly is a super food? As the word “superfood” is merely a marketing term, it is important to do your own research to determine which foods will be best to incorporate into your healthier living plan. The good news is that many common foods can have a direct weight loss benefit.

The following are examples of foods that can influence weight loss. Oats can leave you feeling full throughout the day and also contain healthy carbohydrates that boost the metabolism and burn fat. Black beans provide satisfying protein without the saturated fat found in red meat. Salmon is a satisfying source of lean protein that also contains good fats that work to lower cholesterol. Drinks can also positively influence weight loss. Green tea can help fill you up with no added calories and also contains antioxidants that speed up your metabolism. These are just a few of the many examples of healthy foods that also aid in weight loss.

Diet is one of the most important aspects of a weight loss program but exercise is just as important. The good news is that developing an exercise program that is steady and simple will provide the most benefit. To begin plan on getting at least 30 minutes of exercise per day. It doesn't have to be intense, even a moderately paced walk around town will burn calories and speed up your metabolism. Once you have provided time for exercise in your daily routine one of the most difficult challenges is already behind you. If able, move up to a steady jog and positive results can be seen in a matter of weeks.

Between diet and exercise the key to weight loss is to establish a negative energy balance in your body. On average a person's metabolism burns 2,000 calories per day. A pound of fat contains roughly 3,500 calories. This means that between exercising and eating less calorie dense foods you can apply that negative energy balance (calories under 2,000) to burning fat. If the number reaches 3,500 you have already burned a pound of fat! Stick with this simple formula and know that you are on the right track to meeting your weight loss goals.

The holidays may seem like a challenging time of the year to lose weight but it is also a great time to start planning for next year. Practice measuring the calories in a food by reading the nutrition information on the packaging. Making meals ahead of time and eating them throughout the week is another great way to stick to your healthier living goals. Also remember with all of the holiday treats provided by our loved ones you can thank someone for the gifts without having to eat them. A healthier you is just around the corner. **Happy Holidays!**

For further information about healthier living consider contacting a Health Navigator at Southeast Health Group. There you can find more information including accessing primary care, behavioral health care, or the other services we provide. To speak to a Health Navigator call 719-336-0478 extension 8. For a medical emergency, don't hesitate to call 911. For a behavioral health emergency, you may contact the Southeast Health Group emergency services line at 800-511-5446.