

7 Surefire Tips to Help You Say No to Gluttony During the Holidays

I used to have this love-hate relationship with the holidays. I salivated when thinking of all the decadent dishes I knew would be there, yet I hated the fact I had no ability to control what and how much I ate. I knew I'd be angry at myself when I saw the numbers start to rise on the scale.

Still, I planned to overeat. I dreamed about it. I looked forward to it. But I dreaded what would happen come January when I halfway woke up from my sugar and carb coma.

How Do I Stop the Madness?

There seemed to be no way to make the madness stop. I would go on a diet every January. Halloween would be the first holiday to throw me off course with all the candy available because, of course, I'd buy the kind I liked so if there were leftovers I'd have some to eat.

Then, Thanksgiving and Christmas with multiple family dinners and by the end of the year, I had gained back all I had lost in the 10 proceeding months plus more. In January, I had to start all over again.

Only I Can Prevent Forest Fires

"Can't anyone help me stop this madness?" I'd scream to myself. In essence, I was talking to the right person because only I could prevent the burgeoning forest fire I had started once I began eating the things I had no control over. Only I had the power to stop myself from sinking once again into the abyss of food addiction, only me when I listened to God's leadership in my life.

Once I began to see the truth, it really helped me not only lose weight, but also live my life in God's true abundance, which has nothing to do with overindulging.

7 Ways to Survive

1. State your commitment and keep it. Write it out. Say it aloud to yourself so your brain knows exactly what you are committing to. Then, stay true to yourself. Plan ahead. Bring an alternative, such as a healthy fresh fruit and nut salad if you aren't eating processed sugar. Don't add any dressing, just fresh fruit and nuts. Set some aside for yourself because when I bring this to holiday dinners, it is usually gone quickly. Most people love alternatives to all the sugary desserts.
2. Know your limits. For many, that is not eating any sugar-laden desserts. Even one bite can be too much. Many times during the holidays, we falsely use the phrase, "Just this little bit won't hurt. I'll just have one piece of pie and then I'll be done." While this may work for some people, it does not work for those who know they are in the category of a sugar or carb addict. One bite leads to another piece and another piece to another and before we know it, we have lost track. One is too many and one more is not enough.
3. When filling your plate, choose a smaller plate if available and then, focus on vegetables but not vegetable casseroles. I'm talking about green beans with sliced almonds or fresh broccoli with garlic. Fill at least two-thirds of your plate with these first. Go for plain baked sweet potatoes or mashed sweet potatoes made with water and butter. Bring an appetizer tray of veggies, fruits, nuts and cheeses. Then you have something to snack on as well. Or provide these options at your own meal.

4. Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners can be healthy meals because many will have turkey as the main meat. This is a great low-calorie protein source. If you are hungry, eat more turkey. Snack on the turkey. Turkey is good. Show the turkey some love. If you need something over the turkey go for the meat drippings, if they are available, instead of the gravy. If you are fixing the meal, have an alternative gravy made with some meat drippings, water and milk available. Use arrowroot powder if need be to thicken it a bit, but it's fine without it.
5. If you have a lot of weight to lose, understand that one holiday meal can mean disaster for you. Viewing your eating plan as a lifestyle instead of a diet will keep you on track. It's not worth throwing away a year of work in one meal. It can happen if you don't get back on track quickly. In my own life, I know this to be true. Once I went off track, even just once, I'd throw my hands up in despair and think, *Oh why not eat the whole pie?* And so I would. I think of diets as short-term fixes for a long-term problem. They do not work because we lose the weight and then put it back on as soon as we begin eating like we always have. We must understand that just like an alcoholic gets better by not drinking alcohol, we will get better by not eating the foods which are addictive to us.
6. A lot of tips out there in weight-loss land will tell you to eat a little of your favorite dessert, to eat sugar in moderation, to save room for your favorite foods and eat less of others. This is dangerous advice for the obese and morbidly obese. There is no stopping us once we get started. Many dietitians, nurses, trainers and doctors don't understand this. However, we know our bodies and we are the only ones who can begin to take charge of ourselves with God's help. We cannot

be led astray because others can eat certain foods and we can't.

7. Change your mindset. I no longer look at holidays and worry I will feel deprived of my formerly favorite treats. I need only look at my before-and-after pictures to understand sugar- and high-carbohydrate-laden foods are my enemies. I see it this way now: I get to eat healthy. Others are stuck in having to eat junk that clogs their system and makes them continue to gain weight, feel miserable and lead them toward an early death, which they could prevent if they just made the right decision.

What Is Freedom?

People ask me, "Don't you want to be free to eat whatever you want?" No, I don't. That mindset is what got me to 430 pounds in the first place. I am free now. I am free from feeling bound to the foods that call my name in the middle of the night and draw me to them.

I am free from my cravings. I am free to say no to food temptations. I am free to walk away and not feel drawn to the foods that will capture and enslave me again. I am free to make healthy choices. I am free to provide good fuel for my body.

My Thanksgiving Meal

This Thanksgiving, I made real food, the kind God created. I had turkey with drippings gravy; baked sweet potatoes; fresh green beans; asparagus; romaine salad with avocados, red onions and almond slices; fresh fruit and pecan salad; and hoecake, which is simply white cornmeal and hot water made like a thick pancake.

I'm going to experiment with a pumpkin cheesecake sweetened

with bananas and stevia with a great pecan, date, cocoa crust. I have no idea if it will work or taste good, but I'll have fun trying to create something healthy and edible.

This Thanksgiving won't be about the food, though. It will be about the ones I am with and the memories I get to create. In the final analysis, this is what feeling abundantly blessed is all about.

Enjoy Super Abundance

After all has been said and done, you will find me counting my blessings, naming them one by one and taking them to the Father of all, the Creator of me and you, good healthy food and the abundance of love and laughter we enjoy each and every day.

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13).

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