

Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

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“Holiday Weight Gain and Tips to Avoid It”

Many of us are desperate to avoid further weight gain, especially during the holiday season. But, since most diets do not assure long term weight loss, how do we do it? Here are a few suggestions that seem to help. First, you do not have to wrap your body in seaweed or forever eat cabbage soup to lose weight sensibly. Nearly all overweight people have tried countless "tricks" to lose weight, only to gain it all back, plus some. The old adage of "calories in versus calories out" is certainly key to a successful weight loss attempt if it is combined with a sensible exercise program. Still, this life style is hard to maintain over a period of years, especially when we are surrounded by tantalizing and delicious foods over the holidays. So, what is one to do? *Life Science* has put together a few diet tricks that should help, starting with avoidance of corn syrup (less than 25 grams a day). Experiments have shown that rats gained significantly more weight when they consumed high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) than when they drank sugar. It seems that fructose does not turn off the powerful hunger sensors in the brain. Check food labels for corn syrup because it is in many common processed foods. Just one can of soda contains about 40 grams of high fructose corn syrup. Another caution is to not replace the corn syrup with agave sweeteners, because they contain anywhere from 55% to 90% fructose (and it will not be on the label). Keep away from addictive, so-called junk food because it can affect your brain in ways similar to drug abuse. Set up structured meal times and do not go for long starvation periods between meals. This will result in a ravenous appetite and over eating at the next meal. Try to slow down your rate of food consumption and savor your food longer. Try to enjoy the flavor and the taste for a little longer before cramming in another mouthful. Claims are that you will feel fuller if you eat slower and do not wolf down your food. Always eat a nutritious breakfast with protein-rich, fiber containing foods plus fruit. Try to avoid processed foods and stick to fresh fruits and vegetables for healthier choices. It may even help to use smaller plates, with smaller serving sizes and avoid second servings. Portion size does count. Estimates go as high as four thousand calories in a typical Thanksgiving meal.

In the America that I love, we realize that "eating on the run" is the worst dietary habit one can have. To be successful, you must make a life style change. Otherwise, it will all be in vain.

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