

# 'Tis the Season for Parties... and Food!

'Spring is here! Now that the warm weather has arrived, invitations for parties are going out. There are graduation celebrations, wedding showers, Memorial Day picnics, Independence Day gatherings, and good old-fashioned barbecues on a Saturday afternoons. We all know with these parties come food and drink and being bathing suit season, these celebrations can be stressful to those watching their weight.

It's easy to eat "bad" food when you are at a party because it's a special occasion and you only attend parties every now and then. The best advice in reducing this party



time stress is - stop thinking about healthy eating as a "diet" and starting thinking about living a healthy life where you choose better foods most of the time. Don't think of eating something bad as "cheating" but

as allowing yourself to enjoy some of your favorite foods in moderation. As soon as you change your mindset, you will become a much happier and less stressed person because you won't be thinking of yourself as dieting. You can still indulge in "bad" food, which is usually not as good for you as other choices, and still feel satisfied.

One of the keys to "everything in moderation" is portion size control. It's difficult to watch your portions but if you pay attention to your internal cues (feeling full) versus the external cues (what's around you or what your friends are eating) then it will be much easier.

To stay on track with your healthy lifestyle, here are some general guidelines for all the parties you'll attend this year:

- *Be sure to have a healthy snack about 1 hour prior to leaving for your party. This will fill you up and reduce your desire to indulge in all the food at the party.*
- *Be sure to drink lots of water!!! The water fills you up and keeps your energy high. If you opt for alcohol, be sure to drink double the water for each serving of alcohol you*

*have. A serving of alcohol equals 12 oz. of beer, 5 oz. of wine, or 1 oz. of liquor.*

- *If you do want to snack at the party, choose fruits and vegetables. They have high water and fiber contents so they will fill you up. Also strive for whole grains and lean proteins. Add spicy mustard, lettuce, tomato, or pepper slices to your sandwiches instead of mayonnaise.*
- *Watch your dessert serving! Have dessert at least 20 minutes after eating to allow your body to digest what you had previously eaten and trigger your brain that you are full.*
- *If you are asked to provide a dish for the party, choose a fruit tray with a yogurt dip instead of cream cheese dip. Bring a vegetable tray with a vinaigrette dressing versus the high-fat creamy alternatives. Make pasta salad with whole grain pasta, lots of vegetables, and a light vinaigrette dressing. Make brownies with unsweetened applesauce instead of oil. No one will know the difference but you!*



- *Hosting the party yourself, offer grilled chicken or turkey burgers (make sure you get ground turkey without the skin) instead of hamburgers and hotdogs. You can also offer vegetable kabobs.*



The key to following a healthy lifestyle is to remember that there is no quick fix and that no one is perfect all the time. So do your best to make the best food choices most of the time. The rest of the time, allow yourself to enjoy your favorite foods. Just do so in moderation. Happy partying!

THE  
MEDICAL  
SPA  
AT NOVA™