



City of Albuquerque

EAP Newsletter

“The City of Albuquerque’s most valuable asset is its employees!”

November/December 2021

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Helpful Links for you and your family:

Stress Management and Emotional Wellness

Resources:

[My Stress Tools](#)

Click the link to register for this free online stress-reduction program!

[Free Webinars from the Solutions Group](#)

Click here to sign up for a variety of free Webinars offered by the Solutions Group

[Coping with Stress and depression during the holidays](#)

This article from the Mayo Clinic offers tips for coping with stress and depression during the holidays

Holiday Eating

By Dave Pulliam, EAP Health and Wellness Coordinator

Most of us overeat every holiday season, regret it, and vow to not repeat that pattern the next year. Then we forget about it and do the same thing, again and again, year after year. But with a few modifications and changing a few bad decisions, you will have a head start on any January resolutions.

First, let’s start off with some good news. According to a study by the New England Journal of Medicine, the average person gains just under a pound over the holidays, with half the people gaining just over two pounds. These are averages, so some gain very little or lost weight, and some gained more than five pounds, but with just a little effort, you should be with the majority. Your scale may not agree with the above statement. But this has more to do with the types of food you are consuming than the amount of body fat you are storing. If you are consuming more simple sugars and starches, or foods higher in sodium, your body will retain more water, which shows on the scale. You will feel more bloated, which shows up in your clothes. Returning to a normal healthy eating pattern will allow you to shed most of this.

Just gaining a pound or two doesn’t sound so bad. You may not even gain any more weight the rest of the year. But the average American does not lose that pound. Then they repeat it the next year. After ten years, the average person is up ten to twenty pounds. You need to modify habits not only for this year, but for the next decade.

It is not just a simple calorie in/calorie out formula. Putting in one or two hard workouts will not negate a few weeks of bad eating. The types of food you are consuming, the volume per meal, the timing of the meal, alcohol consumption, your stress pattern and even your sleep pattern will affect weight gain and loss. That doesn’t mean you should not be active. Exercise does much more than just burn calories. It impacts your brain activity, reduces stress, aids in gut health and digestive capabilities, and impacts sleep. Keep up a regular activity pattern. This will help keep your metabolism churning and you feeling your best. November and December are my favorite times to go to the gym, because so many people are skipping out. It is often like having your own private workout space, and you will get your workouts completed faster.

This doesn’t mean you cannot enjoy some holiday foods. A few indulgences will not make you gain pounds. But be selective. Enjoy some of your favorites, and keep your long-term goals in mind. If you are not perfect, forgive yourself and plan to do better at your next meal. With these thoughts in mind, here are a few suggestions to help you plan for success.

- Eat slowly. Give your body and brain time to register when you are full. There are many tricks to help this.

Crisis Management

Resources:

[AGORA CRISIS CENTER](#)

1-866-HELP-1-NM

[NEW MEXICO CRISIS AND](#)

[ACCESS LINE](#)

1-855-NMCRISIS

[SUICIDE PREVENTION](#)

[LIFELINE](#)

1-800-273-TALK

[NATIONAL DOMESTIC](#)

[VIOLENCE HOTLINE](#)

1-800-799-SAFE

[HOPELINE: CALL OR TEXT](#)

1-877-235-4525

We'd Love to Hear From you!

Please call or email us for more information on our program or to set up an appointment! Our contact info is below!

Phone (8am-5pm):

(505) 768-4613

Email:

eap@cabq.gov

After Hours Phone:

(505) 254-3555

TalkSpace is a text therapy platform free to CABQ Employees and family members 14 and older (must have Presbyterian Insurance thru CABQ)

- Use small plates. Many of us are conditioned to clean our plates, and a small plate makes this easier. And if you have to make multiple trips to fill your plate, you will tend to eat less.
 - Make a point to put down your utensil between bites.
 - Use your non-dominant hand to eat. This works great until you develop better coordination.
 - Use chopsticks. This works really well with mashed potatoes and gravy.
 - When loading your plate, don't let your foods touch. This makes you take smaller helpings, and gives you something different to obsess about.
 - Wait at least 25 – 30 minutes before a second helping. Give your body time to process.
- Do not practice holiday eating for two weeks before the holiday. This is not only for holiday cookies but can be applied to Halloween candy.
 - Beware the large calorie bombs. There are some foods you know no human should eat. The few minutes of enjoyment and sugar high will be followed by long periods of regret.
 - Just because it has been a tradition, does not mean you have to do it. Someone was the first person to do it, be that pioneer.
 - If you do not make it, you will not have to eat it. Choose wisely what you prepare.
 - Watch the volume you prepare. Four people do not need a twenty-pound turkey. You may think everyone wants leftovers, but they do not need them either.
 - If you do not want to eat all the cookies and treats, take them to work and share. Many hands make light work. But also:
 - If you care about your coworkers, don't take leftover cookies and treats to work. Not everyone can have strong willpower all day.
 - Grandma may feel hurt if you don't have a second or third helping, but she will get over it quicker than you will lose the extra weight.
 - Sitting around complaining how bloated you feel will not help you or burn many calories. Get up, move around, or walk around and look at decorations. This will help with the feeling of bloat.
 - Drink more water. A glass before a meal will help curb your hunger, and water throughout the day will help your body digest foods.
 - One meal will not ruin you, it is what you do over several weeks that has the biggest impact. If you have several days of sweets or high fat foods, you will crave that taste at the expense of healthier choices. Watch the trends and patterns of your food choices.
 - When cleaning up after a meal, bag and freeze food right away. If it is in the refrigerator, you feel pressured to eat it before it spoils.
 - Don't be afraid to throw things out. This may trigger your internal voice of what your mother would say about starving children, but they need nutritional food, not deserts.
 - There are many families that don't have enough to eat. Vow to prepare one or two less items, and donate to food pantries and worthy causes.

Holidays are about the meaning of that holiday, whether it is Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas or Kwanzaa, not how much you put on your plate. It is a time to be with family and friends, not National Pumpkin Pie Week, National Turkey and Gravy Day, or National Tamale Day. Food can be a part of a holiday celebration, but should not be the entire focus. You should give thanks for things that make you grateful, not just for how stretchy your waistband is. Give emphasis where it belongs, forgive yourself if you are not perfect, and try to do a little better each day.

Monthly Inspirational Quote:

***"I am grateful for what I am and have. My Thanksgiving is perpetual."*—Henry David Thoreau**