

ATgoal

Nothing tastes as good as thin feels.

by **Terry Simpson, MD, FACS**

During the holiday season, there will be many excuses to gain weight. Everyone will have candy, cookies and lots of processed foods around to provide a temptation. There are those who look at such food the way a reformed alcoholic looks at booze, and stay away entirely. Then there are those who are able to enjoy a modest portion of those items, satisfy their tastes and move on.

The simple way to handle it is to plan ahead. Your body will count every calorie and process it all, not caring that the fudge is only made once a year by Aunt Mabel.

First, start by writing out your goal for the New Year. Is it to maintain your lost weight, or to lose more? Then write out all the reasons you want to lose weight: health, better fitting pants, playing with kids—whatever. It helps to remind yourself of your goal, and it also helps to understand that no matter which weight loss surgery you had, if you eat junk food, you will not have the same result as you would if you abstain. Write that down.

Next, carry these reasons with you. Write them on an index card, so that when you go to a party, you can review them. Every time you choose to eat a lot of food or graze on snacks, you are making a statement: that the food is more important than weight loss. So change your thinking—instead, weight loss or weight maintenance should be central to what you do.

If you find that you can take a bite of something, enjoy it and move on, that is great. But if one bite leads to another, you need to remember that this food will not make you feel better. It will

ultimately make you feel worse—usually ashamed and wanting to give up. This is not the time to give up: this is the time to commit to your goal and to put into practice what you need.

So, review your cards, keep your goals in mind, and if you slip up, don't give up. Instead of over-indulging, simply get up and throw out the rest. Food in the trash doesn't look as tempting as food on a silver platter.

Another good tip: most parties and functions have some good-for-you food. Start with that and see if you can get your protein in first. Leave room for a bit of processed food, but not a lot. Fill up with the good stuff and then reward yourself with something simple. Don't fall into the salad dressing trap—thinking the carrots and celery are okay, but then loading them with a tablespoon of salad dressing.

Enjoy the holidays. But remember, feeling thin is great. Make this the holiday season where you lose weight, not gain it!

