

Extension Notes

Personal Column for November 23, 2010

By Gary Hall, ISU Regional Extension Education Director

### **Don't Get Discouraged by Holiday Weight Gain**

We all worry about how much weight we are going to put on over the holiday feeding season. Our tactics against that gain might include more time at the gym, skipping meals or sawing a few more cords of wood. Just in case that holiday weight should happen to sneak on, don't get discouraged.

The goal, according to Extension Nutrition Specialists, should be for us not to gain weight. How do we accomplish that goal? Use a smaller plate at holiday meals. This will keep your portions smaller. Try not to go back for seconds. Stay away from a lot of gravy, sauce, butter and desserts and be sure to eat bigger portions of healthier items, like vegetables. Lean meats, fresh fruits and fresh vegetables are excellent ways to maintain weight.

Keep exercising most days during the week for at least 30 to 60 minutes. Families could go for a walk after Thanksgiving dinner or go sledding during Christmas break when the snow is on the ground. Stay active throughout the holidays.

If weight gain does occur, don't be discouraged. Nutritionists tell us the average person gains 10 pounds from Thanksgiving to the Super Bowl. Just keep an eye on your weight during the holidays and if weight is getting higher, try to minimize your portions and keep a healthier diet.

Consider decreasing daily calorie intake by 250 calories and increase exercise by 250 calories. Just following this simple creed can help one pound disappear each week.

Now here is the part I really like. When you do lose those pounds or you maintain your desired weight be sure to give yourself a reward for reaching your goal. Celebrate in some way that doesn't involve eating food. Consider buying that big screen television, going to the new Harry Potter movie or just enjoying more time with your family. Happy Holidays!

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