



# Growing Up Healthy & Active

## December

### Holiday Weight Gain— Truth or Myth?

“They” say most people gain five to 10 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year’s. However, a recent report from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) indicates that Americans gain only about one pound over the holidays.

NIH researchers weighed 195 volunteers (aged 19 to 82 years) six weeks before, during, and after the winter holiday season. The volunteers were asked about several factors that might influence weight changes, such as stress, hunger, activity level, changes in smoking habits or number of holiday parties attended. The researchers found that only two factors influence weight gain: level of hunger and level of activity.

Researchers also found that the volunteers believed they had gained much more weight than they actually had. Fewer than 10 percent gained more than five pounds. However, overweight and obese volunteers were more likely to gain five pounds than those who were not overweight.

Extra pounds often result when recently added weight isn’t lost before the next overeating event. Putting the focus on balancing physical activity and food intake takes some of the emphasis off food. Physical activity also is a proven way to reduce stress.

### Top 10 List for a Healthy Holiday

1. Plan holiday celebrations around activities.
2. Concentrate on quality, not quantity—of holiday foods and activities. Keep your portions in proportion!
3. Give yourself the gift of planned physical activity. Current recommendations are to walk 10,000 steps, or about 5 miles, a day.
4. Never skip meals before or after a big celebration, this creates a famine-feast-famine cycle.
5. Put eating in perspective! Your attitude is your strongest asset.
6. Spend less time in the kitchen.
7. Rethink the food gifts you give. Consider fruit and nuts instead of homemade candies.
8. Go to the back of the line. Practice being a slow eater.
9. Get adequate sleep! Being tired also affects your mental ability to resist temptations.
10. Plan ahead. Schedule time for yourself and physical activity on a daily basis.

### Just Do It—Get Active

- Take the family ice skating.
- Go sledding with family or friends.
- Try cross-country skiing or snowboarding.
- Shovel the sidewalk and driveway—your own and/or a elderly neighbor’s.

### Recipe of the Month: Winter Crisp

#### Filling:

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar  
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon grated lemon peel  
5 cups unpeeled, slice apples  
1 cup raw cranberries  
Combine sugar, flour, and lemon peel in a medium bowl and mix well. Stir in apples and cranberries. Spoon into a 6-cup baking dish. Prepare topping.

#### Topping:

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup rolled oats  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup packed brown sugar  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup whole wheat flour  
2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
3 tablespoons soft margarine, melted

Combine oats, brown sugar, flour and cinnamon in a small bowl. Stir in melted margarine. Sprinkle topping over filling. Bake at 375° for 40 minutes or until filling is bubbly and top is brown. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 6 servings.

### For More Information

Visit these ISU Extension Web sites:

*Nutrition*—[www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/)

*Answerline*—[www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline)

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