

# Holiday Overeating - Prevention & Cure

## Lots of family. Lots of food.

By Steve Meyerowitz, Sproutman®

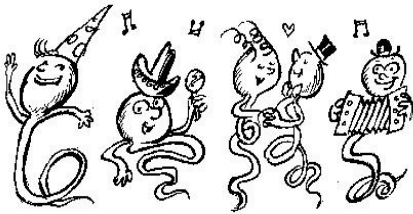
For most of us, the holidays are a great time. A break from the routine. You know the drill. Going back home. Long trips by airplanes or cars. Friends and family. It's a good time for many, but also a stressful time for some. Whether you are a child visiting a parent, vice-versa, or some other combination, you are about to commence a dietary adventure requiring dozens of mini-decisions. Even the best of us will likely get a few wrong.

If you follow a special dietary practice, you will need to carefully navigate through what is often a bounty of food but perhaps little that suits your diet. What's more, your personal challenges will likely not go unnoticed. Questions will be raised and with it worries or at least discussion, wanted or not, about your diet. For some, this is a dreaded moment. For others, this is a teaching moment. If you're on a strict diet, you may find little to eat, but for many, the opposite is the problem. The food choices and temptations are overwhelming and the result is overeating.

Well, we all have different digestive capacity and some of us can manage overeating better than others. You've heard about people with stomach's of steel? Sure. And some folks can sleep on a bed of nails. But for most of us if we overeat, we end up just feeling tired, bloated, or guilty—not necessarily in that order! If that's where you're headed, you've got three choices: A) A train wreck B) Damage control and repair, or C) Prevention.

### Pre-Fiesta Strategy

This is the best prevention and a sure way to avoid a train wreck. As I said before, no matter what your diet is, you're going to be making dozens of food choices. You know what you can eat and what you can't. What you will and what you won't. But the decisions that affect us all are those of quantity and variety.



“How much” is the big one. Go into your meal with a strategy. Maybe something like: No matter what temptations are before me, ‘I will only eat soup and salad,’ or ‘I will only take one portion of everything,’ or ‘I’m skipping dessert.’ Above all, you must protect your plate from involuntary servings. You serve yourself. Only you know how much you can tolerate before you max out your capacity. Here is your mantra: ‘Small portions.’ It will save you!

Variety is the other challenge. Holiday dinners have too many different foods. There is the clash of different types of proteins from nuts and seeds to beans and cheeses and meats, etcetera, etc. All this weighs heavily on your system. The digestive track accomplishes amazing things, but it is not a cement mixer. You will recover. The bloat will eventually subside. But the byproducts of incomplete digestion linger on to impact your immunity and long term health.

Now you've got your goals. Follow the “rules of prevention” and stick to them no matter how many roadblocks, detours, bells and whistles, flashing lights, gawks and protestations, guilt-laden wisecracks, and to-die-for desserts are thrown in your path.

### The Rules of Prevention

Having a good time does not require pigging out. Food is only part of the holiday. Spend more time interacting with the people or the environment or in discussion of the many topics of the day. Revamping the U.S. healthcare system, for example, would be a good one!

## Secrets to Gastronomical Survival

*Or How to Feel Great after the Big Feast*

- \* Drink Before. Sip During
- \* Small Mouthfuls, Small Portions
- \* Talk or Chew, not Both
- \* Go Light on the Carbs
- \* Choose. You Can't Eat Everything
- \* Break the Overeating Cycle



*Drink Before. Sip During.* Water is a great cleanser. Drink plenty before the eating begins. That empties your stomach and prepares it to receive the approaching bounty. Lots of liquids during the meal dilute the enzymes in your stomach. During eating sip enough to keep dry foods wet and flowing, but don't wash down your food. Food needs to spend time in your stomach in contact with concentrated (undiluted) digestive enzymes.

*Small Mouthfuls, Small Portions.* Discipline starts before food enters your mouth. After those taste bud receptors start firing-up, it is really hard to slow them down. You must make a conscious decision to reduce before the fork touches the lips. Consider choosing a small plate. Or just small portions and chew slowly and thoroughly.

*Talk or Chew, not Both.* Didn't your mother tell you this? Either you're going to do a good job of talking or a good job of chewing, but probably not both. Chew every forkful until it is virtually digested in your mouth, then swallow. Is that 30 crunches? Fifty? Whatever it takes. We're supposed to enjoy the food anyway, right? Take your time.

*Go Light on the Carbs.* Breads, crackers, cakes, potatoes, chips, desserts....these foods fill us up with very little redeeming nutritional value. Eschewing these foods, leaves more room for the good stuff. Besides, these are the foods that promote early onset diabetes for folks in their forties and older.



*Choose. You Can't Eat Everything.* The smorgasbord table is radiating with its comestible beauty and seducing you to try everything in sight! The temptation is absolutely magnetic. The only hope you have for survival is the discipline you decided in your pre-fiesta strategy. You can't eat everything. Make an executive decision and choose what you're going to eat and what you're going to avoid

before you get sucked in and it's too late.

*Break the Overeating Cycle.* If you find yourself overwhelmed, here's the rescue remedy. Pull back. Step away from the table. Go to the bathroom. Rinse out your mouth. Bring a small bottle of mouthwash with you and cleanse your tastebuds. That breaks the chain of the enzymatic engine. It's the antidote. Or perhaps you prefer to just brush your teeth. Either way works. Once the smoke is cleared and you've regained control of your stomach, return to the scene of the crime. Once there, use your mouth to chat, not chew.

## What If You Fail?

These are the rules to prevent a gastronomical catastrophe. But what if despite your heroic efforts, the triple-decker chocolate brownie gets you in the end? The cure for excess is cleansing. If you have a blow-out party in your house, it takes some time to clean up, right? Well, it's the same with your "inner house." Yes, you can find a regimen that's doable and fits your lifestyle. Tune in next time for strategies for cleansing. P.S. If you absolutely can't wait, start reading this [book](#).