

# On Track with Barix

November 2022

## Take These Steps to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

It's no surprise that following healthy habits is especially challenging this time of year. Holiday treats pop up everywhere – the breakroom, gatherings with friends and family, work parties, and cookie swaps. How do you avoid holiday weight gain with so much temptation? Here is the answer – you need a plan to stay in control of your eating and stay on track with healthy lifestyle habits.



### How to Plan for Success

A plan to have a free-for-all during the holidays and start back on your eating/exercise plan in January is sure to result in weight gain. Instead, set limits and stick to your goals. Avoid, limit, and replace foods and habits that don't align with your goals. Starting 2023, a little leaner, more capable, and more confident will be great.

Your plan should take into account past struggles. For example, suppose you tend to stress over shopping. In that case, you may want to consider shopping ahead of time and simplifying your list. Maybe your struggle is the constant barrage of sweet treats – have no-added-sugar treats available to enjoy.

Before the bustle becomes full-blown, make a plan and a goal to make it to January without an extra pound gained. Below are some typical struggles encountered over the holidays and potential strategies to navigate them successfully.



### **Keep Stress at Bay**

The holidays can be stressful. It's worth thinking through this potential pitfall of the holidays since stress increases hormones related to cravings for junk food and weight gain.

To manage stress, you may plan to simplify holiday preparations, gift-giving, and celebrations. Other strategies could include the following:

- Keep up with exercise
- Add a few minutes of meditation or deep breathing.
- Making time for self-care.

### **Physical Activity is a Must**

It's tempting to ditch your regular exercise routine when so many activities are vying for your attention. Exercise helps to relieve stress, increases metabolism, boosts mood, and helps you feel energetic – do you want to give that up? When time is at a premium, see if you can multitask:

- Walk on the treadmill while watching the Holiday Channel.
- Take the kids sledding (and maybe skip the cookie decorating).
- Get your friends to sign up for a holiday fitness event instead of going out for drinks.

Remember that every step counts if you're shooting for 10,000 steps a day. Work to build in steps throughout the day.

### **Meal Prep Makes Daily Life Easier**

Take the time meal to plan, prep, and stock up on healthy options. If you have healthy choices that you enjoy available, it will be much easier to limit or avoid foods that don't fit into your plan. Buy foods in individual servings or prep and package to save time.

## **Keep Your Eating and Drinking Schedule**

It's easy to skip meals and snacks, but staying on schedule will help you make better food choices.

Eat foods in order. Start with protein. Next, eat vegetables, followed by a small amount of fruit or whole grain. Finally, if you want a little treat, make it no-added-sugar. Holiday meals can be high in simple carbs - you'll naturally limit them if you prioritize protein and veggies.

Drink calorie-free beverages between meals.

## **Practice Avoidance**

- If the breakroom is always filled with treats, find another place to eat your lunch.
- Don't have holiday treats in your home – your family will have many opportunities to eat them elsewhere.
- Hang out far away from the food/dessert table at a party.

## **Share Healthy Foods**

- Bring a healthy dish and a no-added-sugar treat to share. This way, you're assured there will be something to eat that aligns with your lifestyle.
- You'll have some favorites to rely on if you try out recipes now.

## **Don't Skimp on Sleep**

A lack of sleep can thwart your weight loss efforts in several ways.

- Increased appetite.
- More cravings for simple carbs.
- Less likely to exercise.
- Lowered metabolism.

## **Be Accountable**

- Weigh yourself regularly. Whatever works for you - once a day or once a week.
- Track food and exercise – if you can't squeeze it in daily, then three times a week.
- Share your plan with a friend, family member, or accountability partner. Other weight loss surgery patients work great for this role.

## **Enjoy Non-Food Ways to Celebrate**

The holidays are a time for celebration. Talk to friends and family about starting new traditions that don't involve food. You could attend holiday concerts or shows, volunteer, make crafts (instead of cookies), attend church services, play games, or have a holiday exercise competition.



### **Find Joy While You Stay True to Healthy Habits**

It can be challenging to stay true to healthy habits over the holidays. You may feel that people expect you to bake cookies, drink eggnog, or splurge and eat larger portions of foods you usually avoid. Staying true to healthy habits is staying true to the #1 reason you had surgery in the first place.

### **Reach Out for Support**

What works well for one may not work for you. If you get off track, don't let it completely derail you. Reach out if you need to – your Barix team is here to support you as you reach your dreams and goals. Making it to January without weight gain may not be easy, but it is possible. We're here to help.

### **Have a Joyful Holiday Season**

Having a plan can help you feel in control. It can help you relax and enjoy the people and activities that make the holidays special. We at Barix wish you and your family the best as you learn new ways to find joy and meaning this holiday season.

Surgery is the beginning of a new way of living - one that makes health a top priority. And the benefits are nothing short of amazing! When surgery is combined with seven specific behaviors, the rewards are multiplied. Consistently putting effort into these steps can pay off in a big way.

