Sodium and Fluid Restriction: Eating Right During the Holidays

The holidays are approaching. This is a time when patients may have difficulty adhering to fluid, sodium or calorie restrictions. The holidays often involve travel, family gatherings and parties which can make sticking to a particular diet difficult. Travel during the holidays often involves fast food restaurants and less time for exercise. Family gatherings and parties tend to include many high calorie and high sodium foods.

To stay as healthy as possible during the holidays, follow these simple tips:

1. Try keeping a food journal including how much fluid and sodium you have consumed each day. Writing it down can help you stay on track.

2. Eat a healthy, low sodium meal before going to a party or family gathering. You’ll be less likely to be tempted by salty foods. Also, if the party is a potluck, bring something low in sodium, like vegetable trays, so your only choices won’t be high sodium food.

3. When there is extra food around, try to keep busy. Offer to wrap gifts or hang decorations. Many people will eat high salt snacks when they are bored.

4. If you are also trying to lose weight, carry your party appetizers on a napkin, not a plate. People are more likely to fill up a plate, even if they aren’t hungry.

If you are not on any dietary restrictions, you might consider asking your healthcare provider if you should be. The holidays can make it difficult when you are on dietary restrictions, but hopefully the above suggestions will be helpful.

For low sodium meal preparation, check out the American Heart Association website (www.americanheart.org) for cookbooks and meal ideas. If your PH care provider works with a licensed dietician, they can help direct you toward healthy ideas as well.

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Did You Know?

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