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Eating Well at Family Gatherings

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When your family and friends get together for special occasions, what is the one thing that you know there will be plenty of? That's right, food! Everyone brings something tasty to share. Your aunt may bring her famous tamales and your cousin may pick up a dessert from the local grocery store. When all of the people you care about get together to celebrate, it is easy to forget to make healthy food choices. How many times have you had so much to eat at a family gathering that you felt really full and tired?

Here are some tips to help you and your family eat healthy and feel good at family gatherings, and every day:

Tip 1: Use a small plate

Instead of grabbing the largest plate you can find, pick a small plate, or only put food on one side of a large plate. This will help limit the amount of food you eat.

Tip 2: Eat small servings

You may want to try some of everything because it all look so good. Take a little bit of a few different foods and avoid putting several scoops of one food on your plate (except vegetables!). When it is time for dessert, cut your slice of pie in half and share it with someone else.

Tip 3: Wait 20 minutes to go back for more

After you eat your first plate of food, wait 20 minutes to go back for more. This will give your stomach enough time to decide if you are full or ready for more food. You may find that you are not so hungry after all!

Tip 4: Balance your meal

Combining different foods to balance each meal you eat will keep you from feeling tired and give you more energy during the day. So how do you combine foods to create a balanced meal?

- Fill most of your plate with colorful vegetables and fruits. These can be fresh, frozen, or canned.
- Add a helping of meat that fits in the palm of your hand
- Avoid foods covered in dressings and sauces
- Avoid sugary foods, like sweet breads and desserts. If you crave something sweet, try eating fruit, like strawberries or peaches.

Tip 5: Drink plenty of water

Instead of drinking alcohol, have some fun and blend a tropical smoothie with mango, papaya, strawberries, and orange juice.

Tip 6: Don't forget physical activity!

You might find yourself spending a lot of time in the kitchen or around the dining table and forget to go outside and move around! Take a walk around the block; kick a ball around in the yard with the kids; get the entire family involved in a relay race or scavenger hunt. The most important thing is to have fun!

Making good food choices and being physically active on a daily basis is the best way to keep you and your family happy and healthy all year.

This public health message is brought to you by the San Diego Prevention Research Center and Familias Sanas y Activas. For more information about free physical activity programs or public pool facilities in South Bay, please contact Sara Solaimani at: 619-594-2965.



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