

Week #18

Party On!—Stay on the Plan

It's easy to eat egg whites for breakfast, a turkey sandwich for lunch and vegetable stir-fry for dinner—if you're cooking for yourself. But things get a little more difficult when you're invited to a party or to a friend's house for dinner. Your hosts are trying to throw a good party—not help you drop 20 pounds, after all. When faced with a party you can 1.) Refuse and eat your chicken and steamed spinach alone at home or 2.) Develop coping strategies. Your choice, but we recommend the latter! Here's how:

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

The easiest thing to do when you're invited to a party is to ask the hostess what she is serving and plan ahead. For example, you can keep breakfast and lunch light and go easy on snacks.

Don't arrive starving

Walking into a party when you're really, really hungry is just asking for disaster. In fact, it's smart to eat something small (a piece of fruit, for example) before you go.

Bring a dish that you know you can eat

This is especially important if you learn that the menu is going to be a high-fat feast.

Use these tactics for controlling calories.

Sit away from the appetizers

Offer to help to stay busy—don't pick!

Ask for a small portion and just a sliver of dessert

Go easy on the alcohol. Alcohol lowers inhibitions, so a glass of wine may be contributing far more than the 150 calories in the drink itself. You also must count the four stuffed mushrooms that, after a few sips, were entirely irresistible!

Ask how something was prepared. For example, you could say “Is there olive or peanut oil in this?” Press for more specifics like how much. Or try, “This looks delicious. What exactly is in it?” If she says “2 cups of canola oil,” take a small portion. Tomorrow, jump into your walking shoes!

[One big dinner will not sabotage the lifestyle changes you've made.]

WHAT IF YOU'RE ENTERTAINING?

Certainly, you don't want to feed guests dry toast and cottage cheese, but you also shouldn't feel pressured to prepare a high-calorie meal. There are plenty of healthy cookbooks with recipes to please almost everyone. Buy one, such as Dr. Jean Harvey-Berino's, *Eating Well Diet*. Prepare something that lends itself to portion control—say chicken breasts, rather than a pasta dish. Serve fruit salad, sorbet or low-fat frozen yogurt for dessert. Pack up leftovers for your guests.

Now you try it:

Write down three tactics (in addition to the ones suggested above) for controlling calories at a social event.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Then, next time you're invited to a dinner or party, practice these new strategies—and, no matter how bad things get, don't abandon your food diary, write down *everything!*

Exercise Goal

Burn 2000 calories this week, the equivalent of walking 20 miles.