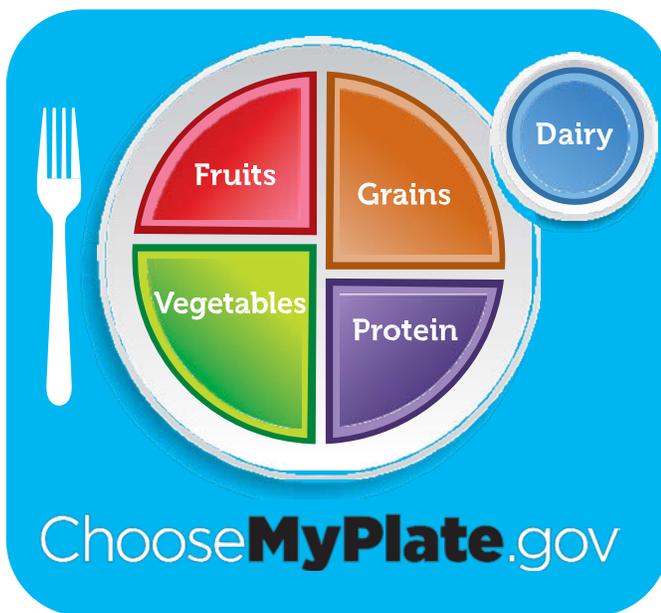


## Surviving the Holidays: Disordered Eating, New Years Resolutions, and the Diet Industry

In America we are blessed with a bounty of food; ever wonder how guilt about eating replaces the appropriate feeling, gratitude? The new year unites millions in a shared goal: Lose weight and get “in shape.” The biggest beneficiary of this yearly phenomenon is (according to Market Data Enterprises) the diet industry which generated \$60.9 billion in revenue during 2010. In addition to weight loss plans and diet support, entrepreneurs in the industry also provide prepared meals, books, videos and a range of other products.

In the eating disorders field it is commonly accepted that diets don't work as a long term solution for overeating. We want to draw some differentiations here. There are “diets” and then there are nutritional guidelines to give our bodies a variety of nutrient rich foods in appropriate quantities and some other less nutrient rich foods in moderation combined with reasonable exercise. We also recommend learning to recognize true hunger and the body's need for refueling. Portion control and fueling the body with three small meals and two small snacks a day to keep metabolism burning is widely recommended. Weight loss (or gain for restrictive eaters) should not exceed two pounds per week. It is commonly held that anything we do for 30 days can become a long lasting change. An exception is people with addictive personalities need more time to break patterns of behavior.



The government simplified the food pyramid into a simple daily plate concept. It's a useful tool to easily identify how our eating patterns and habits may be far from this graphic. The next time you order a meal at a restaurant, picture this graphic and compare it to the food on your plate.

### Obesity in America

You should always consult a physician about your physical health. Combining appropriate physician oversight, therapy with an eating disorders expert, and nutritional counseling with a registered dietitian is recommended for those who struggle with obesity. Twelve million

Americans are considered severely obese, defined as more than 100 pounds overweight. Bariatric surgery is helpful for a segment of the severely obese population. It is not an “easy or simple fix” for overeating.

Nearly a third of American children are overweight and some experts believe up to one third of children will eventually suffer from diabetes. For the first time in our history,

some medical experts warn our kids may be on track to have a shorter life span than their parents as a direct result of the obesity epidemic.

In the eating disorders field, we see the same spectrum of obsession with food and shame in the obese as in anorexics and bulimics. We object to the use of BMI (body mass index) measurements of children at schools. Why? you ask. We believe that children experience peer shame if their bodies don't meet certain standards. Shame combined with food obsession is a prescription for a life long struggle with food. It is widely held, that BMI is not a "stand alone" protocol to measure a healthy body size. It is a contradiction that schools measure BMI while offering fatty, sugary foods and cut physical education classes due to budget restraints.

The American Academy of Pediatric Physicians recommends 5-2-1-0: Five daily helpings of vegetables and fruits, limit of 2 hours of TV or video games, 1 hour of physical activity, and 0 sugar drinks per day. Physical activity should be the fun things that kids do naturally; they do not need gym memberships!

In this season of celebrations if you are the hostess, offer healthy options as appetizers and on your dinner menu. If you are a guest, take a healthy appetizer or dish to share. Limit sauces, creamy dips, deep fried appetizers, crackers and cheese. Small plates are useful in limiting portion sizes. Do not go back for seconds. Fill half your dinner plate with salad and vegetables, one quarter with meat, and the final quarter with starch. Chew your food thoroughly and eat slowly to recognize when you are full. In choosing an alcoholic beverage, choose low calorie beer or wine and limit your intake. Exercise. Think about the things you loved to do as an active child (swim, bicycle, etc) and enjoy those things again.

Don't hang out at the food table. Move around; talk to others. Conversation is a great alternative to overeating! If you have a day when you fail in your objectives, don't despair. Start over the next meal. Remember: "Some say motivation doesn't last. Bathing doesn't either. That's why we recommend doing it daily!" (Zig Zigler)

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