

# Healthy Eating in Social Situations

You've made a commitment to yourself to eat healthier foods.

And you're proud of yourself for sticking to your plan when you are at home, work, or school.

Now you're ready to practice those new healthy habits away from your usual settings.

When you're in social situations, such as parties, holiday meals, and restaurants, you may worry about how you can stick to your healthy eating goals and still have fun.

But those social situations don't have to be stressful.

Here are some things you can try to make them easier.

Plan ahead.

If you're eating at a restaurant, you may be able to check the menu online first.

And if you're going to a holiday meal or a party, try setting a goal before you go.

Maybe your goal is to eat smaller portions so you can still try a little bit of everything.

Or maybe you can fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables and use the other half to enjoy some other foods you'd like to try.

Deciding what you'll do before you arrive can help you stick to your goal.

Remember, it's okay to say, "No, thanks."

At first, that might feel hard. You may feel like you'll miss out if you don't join in.

Or you may be worried about hurting someone's feelings. But it's okay to stick to your plan.

If someone offers you something you didn't plan on having, try saying something like, "No, thanks. I'm good."

Or you could try saying something like, "Maybe later when I'm not so full."

Practice mindfulness.

Sure, special occasions usually involve food. But there's more to enjoy too.

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Instead of focusing on how you'll stick with your healthy eating plan, try shifting your focus to the social situation you're in.

Take in everything around you.

Try to really listen to the people who talk to you.

Notice the festive decorations.

And when you eat, try to appreciate the flavors you're experiencing.

Finally, go easy on yourself.

Even if you try to do all these things, you may not stick to your plan. And that's okay.

Healthy eating is a lifelong journey.

It's okay if you don't get it perfect every time. Just keep trying. You can do this.