

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2013

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8 TIPS FOR EATING HEALTHY DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

(SPRINGFIELD, IL)—The holiday season is a time to celebrate with loved ones.

Unfortunately for many, it also becomes a time of overeating and weight gain. It can be a challenging time of year to make healthy choices, but eating well during the holidays is possible. "Holiday meals can be enjoyable and healthy," said Ammie Graham, MS, RD, LD, dietitian in Food and Nutrition Services at St. John's Hospital. "By planning ahead, watching portion sizes and engaging in fun activities, weight gain be avoided."

St. John's Hospital offers the following tips to help you enjoy the festivities without expanding your waistline:

- Start your day off right with a small meal that includes whole grains, fruit, low-fat or fat-free dairy and protein such as eggs, ham or peanut butter.
- Do not starve yourself before a holiday party. Eat a small, low-calorie meal or snack such as fruit, nuts or a few whole grain crackers so you are not tempted to overdo your calorie intake for the day.
- 3. Keep a mental checklist of how much you are consuming, and make a conscious effort to balance your plate with plenty of fruits and veggies. Choose between foods you definitely will eat, those you will sample and those you will skip.

- Be careful with beverages. Alcohol can lessen inhibitions and induce overeating.
 Many alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages can also be full of calories and sugar.
- Take your focus off the food. Mingle with friends and settle into the festivities
 before making your plate. Move the socializing away from the buffet or appetizer
 trays to minimize unconscious nibbling.
- 6. Be a great guest and help the host wash dishes or serve drinks. This allows you to be active and provides time away from food.
- 7. Plan time for exercise. Exercise helps relieve holiday stress and prevent weight gain.
- 8. Turn holiday baking time into holiday crafting time. Make non-edible goodies like wreaths, ornaments and other handmade gifts.

For more information about eating healthy during the holidays, please contact Food and Nutrition Services at 544-6464 to speak with a dietitian.

ABOUT HOSPITAL SISTERS HEALTH SYSTEM

Hospital Sisters Health System is a Roman Catholic health care mission founded to continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. Sponsored by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care framed in traditional values taught by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi. It is dedicated to serving all people, including the poor and the needy, at each of its 13 Local Systems in Illinois (Belleville, Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Highland, Litchfield, Springfield and Streator) and in Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org.

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