

The holiday season is speeding by, but there are still plenty of chances to do some major damage to your diet in the final stretch.

For many, the holidays are a special time of year to celebrate with family and friends. That special time can come with food temptations around every corner and can lead to holiday weight gain if left unchecked.

According to Ginger Becker, a registered dietician at OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center in Alton, it's fine to enjoy your favorite treats during these special holiday times. However, she says heading into a celebration well prepared can make a big difference for your healthy eating goals.

"One great tip is to bring a diet friendly dish, such as a vegetable platter, a fruit platter, a smoked salmon platter. Something that's lower in calories to balance out all of the higher calorie foods that you'll have," said Becker.

Another tip – don't head to a party hungry.

"Eat light before the gathering," suggested Becker. "Do not starve yourself throughout the day. You will end up eating more than you anticipated and end up sabotaging yourself."

Becker also suggests to pay attention to what's in your glass. Plenty of partygoers make the mistake of drinking more calories than they expected.

"The type of beverage that you drink can make a large difference in the calorie cost, so it's definitely something to consider if you're going to a party, whether it's non-alcoholic or alcoholic beverages. Try to avoid the syrupy sugar type drinks that can easily have about five hundred calories a drink," warned Becker.

With these tips, Becker says a happy holiday is possible without your diet going down the drain. However missteps will happen. When they do, forgive yourself, move on, and have a Merry Christmas.