

# Keeping Slim in the Summer Simmer

## Simple steps to keep your diet in check during the picnic party season

Perhaps you've already put your diet in danger. Don't worry, still plenty of time to not let the summer barbecue and picnic predicament get the best of your waistline.

The solution is really no different than any other time of year. It comes down to a little planning.

For instance, now is the time to take advantage of the local, fresh vegetables at roadside stands and farmers markets. They make a great grilling alternative to the steaks, burgers and brats.

You can even add fruit to the fire.

*"It enhances the flavor," says Erin Hanley, Lead Clinical Dietician at OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center in Ottawa. So, that's something people don't think about. And fruit, taking advantage of the fruit in the season, is just a wonderful way to have something sweet at the end of the meal without going for the ice cream or, you know, things like that people tend to do in the summer."*

Another tip to not overdoing it at the backyard gathering is to have a small snack at home before you go, so you're less hungry.

You can also prepare a more healthful dish to bring to the cookout.

*"As long as it's OK with the host or hostess, see if you can bring something healthy," says Hanley. If you know it's just going to be stuff loaded with calories, as long as it's not going to offend anybody, to bring something that, you know, a nice big salad or something you feel comfortable eating and not totally blowing your calories for the week."*

The biggest splash you can make is not diving into the sugary drinks. Soft drink consumption increases dramatically in the summer. And diet drinks are not the answer.

*"Whether it's true that diet is viewed - keeps as much weight on as sugar, I'm not sure," says Hanley. But it does keep you craving that sweet taste. And so, that's not a good thing. Just the same as flavored water. Those flavored, sweetened waters. You just want to drink regular water as much as you can - or fruit-infused water, if you need a little flavor."*

Of course it's also county fair time. While interesting, nearly no mouth-watering munchie along the midway is going to be good for you.

Hanley says splurge if you have to, but only once and then wait until next year.