Script – Print - Besting the Bountiful Buffet Battle

Tips on making sure the holidays don't become a food fight for your waistline

Tis' the season to be jolly, but it doesn't mean your belly needs to be as big as Santa's.

Sure, the temptations are as plentiful as the array of food that will greet you at every holiday party and family dinner. However, a little will power and some planning can help.

Nathan Hamman, Manager of Wellness at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center suggests having something to eat before heading to the party and - once there - limit and measure your intake.

"Try to eat to 80 percent full", says Nathan Hamman, Manager of Wellness at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "So, if you keep that mindset in your head when you go someplace, I'm going to stop when I'm 80 percent full because you are probably really 80 percent full by the time it actually catches up with you, that'll kind of change what you might have instead of filling you plate ahead of time."

Key to meeting that 80-percent full rate is using a smaller plate and concentrating on the 'good for you' foods.

"Fruits and vegetables first", says Nathan Hamman, Manager of Wellness at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "But watch out for the dips. So, you know, if there's salad dressing or French onion dip or even like some of the dips that you can dip your fruit in, those are going to be higher calories. So, try to do the fruits and vegetables plain to start off with. Even hummus can add up if you put tons of it on your food."

And avoid a liquid diet - especially alcohol - as more than a drink or two can really add up the calories.

Hamman also says don't think you can splurge now with a plan to take off the extra pounds when - or better yet, if - you make your traditional New Year's resolution to lose weight.

"If you overindulge then it just makes it more difficult when it's time to try to change your habits," says Nathan Hamman, Manager of Wellness at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "And it takes a long time to get it back off. If you put ten pounds of between Thanksgiving and Christmas, it could take 10 weeks to lose it. Do you really want to do that to yourself?"

Better yet is to work in some occasional exercise between holiday parties and dinners.