

ADVANCES FOR Audiologists

The average person gains seven to 10 pounds between Thanksgiving and Christmas. As if that weren't bad enough, according to a report in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, most people don't ever lose the weight they put on during the holidays. Repeat this cycle over a 3-year time period, and you could be carrying an additional 30 pounds.

This is alarming news, because currently 60 percent of the U.S. population is overweight, and 30 percent are classified as obese. Being overweight has become a huge health problem for our country—a serious drain on our medical finances and work productivity. Additionally, those who are overweight die sooner. Think about it. How many overweight or obese people do you see in their 80s and 90s?

Extra pounds are often the behind-the-scenes culprit contributing to diabetes, hypertension, heart problems, fatigue, and muscle weakness. And being overloaded with too much weight contributes to almost all orthopedic problems, especially pain and stiffness in the back and lower extremities. Since you can't drive a Mac truck on Volkswagen tires and ethanol, you need to stop the holiday weight gain before it begins. If you're already a victim of the holiday bulge, you need to remove the excess weight tastefully, slowly and sensibly.

"But how?" you may be thinking. "I can't resist that holiday eggnog or Aunt Sally's pumpkin pie. And I've tried just about every diet under the sun."

Unfortunately, people often interpret the word "diet" to mean deprivation, punishment and failure. The true meaning of the word "diet" is Greek for "a way of life." Therefore, we all need to banish diets and focus on our way of life—especially during the holiday season. So, stop buying into the fad diets, save your money and simply liquidate now.

The Liquidation Way of Life Fortunately, there is an easy way to keep those excess holiday pounds off and lose the ones you've already accumulated. Quite simply, stop drinking calories for thirst. In other words, if you can spill it, don't swill it! By following this one simple rule, you will painlessly shed unwanted pounds.

Consider this: If you drink one 8-ounce glass of milk a day, you ingest the caloric

equivalent of one "fat" pound each month-more than 10 pounds in a year. The same holds true if you drink one can of sugared soda or one small glass of fruit juice a day. If you drink all three every day, you risk gaining three pounds a month, or a whopping 36 pounds in a single year! So if you would stop drinking these three items each day and make no other changes in your diet or exercise, you would drop over 36 pounds in a single year.

Here's a handy list of drinks you can easily liquidate during the holiday season:

8 oz of eggnog = 343 calories

3.5 oz of red wine = 74 calories

12 oz of beer = 100 to 130 calories

8 oz of milk = 100 to 130 calories

1.5 oz of hard liquor = 97 calories

4 oz of juice = 100 to 120 calories

12 oz of soda = 120 calories

In the short time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, daily consumption of these liquid items can easily top 3,500 calories. Add to that the excess cookies and cakes and other holiday treats people consume; and it's no wonder people gain weight during the holidays! One pound of fat equals 3,500 calories.

Therefore, to lose weight, you either have to work off 3,500 calories through exercise, or you have to not put an extra 3,500 calories into your body.

To make the most of the liquidation way of life during the holiday season, follow these guidelines:

H2O is the Way to Go-Drink eight to 16 glasses of calorie-free water for thirst every day. Never sip a single calorie in liquid form, except for the occasional glass of "medicinal" red wine, a party beer (just one!) or nonfat milk on your morning cereal. If you're overweight, your liquid calories should only come spoonful-by-spoonful as soup or on cereal, but never gulped from a glass, cup, can, or bottle.

Avoid "On the Go" Drinks-The holidays are a hectic time. As such, many people grab meals "on the run" and therefore overlook the added calories of shakes, smoothies, slushies, or blended specialty drinks that they consume as breakfast or lunch "on-the-go." Because the liquidation way of life says "if you can swill it, spill it," drink nothing out of a glass, can, cup, or straw that has a calorie. So avoid spillable pick-me-up beverages that act as a substitute for food,

because they only give a temporary feeling of having eaten. While they pack on the calories, they don't give the sustained feeling of being full. Within an hour or so, you'll be raiding the refrigerator or vending machine to get your fill of real food, which will only add more calories to your day.

Dilution is the Solution-Most "zero calorie" drinks sweetened with artificial sugar substitutes-such as diet soda-are probably OK to consume if you are trying to lose excess pounds. However, some research suggests that these substitutes give you a hankering for sweets. So drink "sweet" zero calorie beverages in moderation. Still, if you just can't stomach plain water, then dilution is the solution. You can dilute any flavored drink-even diet soda-by at least 50 to 90 percent and still get the sweetness and taste you crave. Also, a diluted glass of juice often resembles an alcoholic beverage. That means at all those holiday parties you can look like you're indulging in the holiday festivities without packing on the pounds for doing so.

Make Time for Tea-Tea is a great way to flavor water. But before you say, "I don't like tea," take a stroll down the tea aisle of your local grocery store. Today's tea is much more than Earl Gray. Tea comes in a multitude of flavors, from citrus to berry to herbs, meaning that you don't have to add any sweeteners to have a great taste. Additionally, tea is so versatile-you can drink it hot, cold, lukewarm, or even on the rocks at a party. It's tea-riffic!

Liquidation is a Lifelong(er) Investment An "oldie but goodie" study dating back to the 1930s about the benefits of a balanced diet has been confirmed and supported again and again. Many research studies have shown that cutting back on calories extends the life of monkeys, rats, mice, and humans. For example, rats and mice that cut their daily caloric intake by 30 to 60 percent lived 30 to 60 percent longer.

Therefore, the real skinny on looking and feeling younger and more energetic any time of year is choosing a way of life that features these marquee headliners: whole grains, fruits, fish, lean meats, green veggies, and lots of water. Deprivation is not the answer. Food is fuel. But, by making some simple and healthy choices about what you consume each and every day, you reduce your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancers, and obesity. And by eating rather than drinking your fruits, you may even add 5, 10, 15, or more productive and fruitful years to your life.

Quite simply, if you follow this simple liquidation way of life-during the holidays and beyond-you, too, will become and remain a healthy, energetic "lightweight" who can enjoy life any time of year.

Dr. Dale Anderson is an author and speaker who practiced medicine for nearly 50 years as a family doctor, board-certified surgeon and board-certified emergency physician. As a speaker, he travels the country prescribing METHOD acting techniques and happiness as good medicine. He also coordinates the ACT NOW project, a coalition of dramatic artists who think medically. Dale's most recent book, "Never Act Your Age," was awarded a National Senior Media Award, a National Health Information Award and a Foreword Magazine Award. For more information, 651-484-5162 or www.acthappy.com.

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