

Healthy celebrations



Medifast.

Welcome to Medifast!

Medifast was developed by doctors and has been recommended by over 20,000 since 1980, so you can be sure it's safe and it works.



What's what

Even when we're changing our lives and getting healthy, life continues all around us, and we deserve to take part in those good times.

When it's time to celebrate a special event, business gathering, or holiday with family and friends, you CAN share in the joy without sacrificing your healthy weight plan.

With a little insight, some planning, and a couple of handy tricks, your next event can leave you with happy memories instead of regret and extra pounds.

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Practical Tips for Navigating Events

The best tip of all: Pay attention

When you're at a gathering, there are hundreds of distractions that can take your mind off of what and how much you're eating. In an instant you can look down and realize your plate is suddenly empty!

The best strategy for continued weight control is to stay mindful and focused when you are interacting with food and drink, and ensure that you're making choices in the best interest of your healthy goals.

Don't Go Hungry

Eating small, regular meals the day of your event can help you stay full and energized so you're less likely to eat something on impulse. If you're currently on the Medifast 5 & 1 Plan®, bring a Medifast Meal with you, or plan to have your Lean & Green™ Meal there—just make sure you stay within Plan guidelines.

Control Your Portions

If you're served a larger-than-necessary portion at a sit-down event, push the extra amount to the side of your plate and stop when you've eaten an appropriate amount. At a buffet, choose a small plate and stick to right-sized servings of lower calorie, nutrient-rich foods. When you're done, you're done.

Search Out The Healthy

Just about every party has healthy food. Lean roasted meats, shrimp cocktail without sauce, raw veggies, and leafy greens are some good examples. For beverages, bring your favorite Medifast Flavor Infusers™ to drink with water, or stick with calorie-free soda, sparkling water, sugar free iced tea, or coffee.

Eat Mindfully

Chew, chew, chew, and savor every wonderful flavor. It typically takes the stomach 15 to 20 minutes to signal the brain that you've had enough food. Get the most out

of each bite by eating slowly and give yourself a chance to note when you're full.

Choose Wisely

If you've reached your weight-loss goal and you're exercising regularly, you may want to splurge with a small serving of something wonderful you only get once a year (say, your Aunt Patty's coffee cake). On those occasions when you have a few bites of extra calories, don't waste them on anything that isn't extraordinary.

Skip Seconds

Double helpings mean doubling up on calories. Once you've finished one right-sized serving of healthy food, move away from the main table and join a lively conversation, or otherwise enjoy the company of those around you.

Rethink Your Drink

Alcoholic beverages are loaded with calories, and are to be avoided on the 5 & 1 Plan®. If you've reached your weight-loss goal and choose to indulge, stick with one or two, and make them light beers, 4 oz glasses of wine, or cocktails made with spirits and zero-calorie mixers. Best yet, volunteer to be a designated driver: Your friends (and your waist) will appreciate it.

Bring Your Own

If you're attending a potluck, picnic, or tailgate party, bring something healthy that you can enjoy on the Medifast Program. One suggestion: a southwest-style salad made with greens, tomatoes, scallions, green peppers, and taco-seasoned ground turkey makes a great Lean & Green™ Meal.



Consider Non-Edible Gifts

When you're visiting over the holiday season, hand soaps, candles, potpourri, and pre-arranged flowers or plants are a nice alternative to food gifts.

Feed Your Spirit and Your Relationships

Social gatherings strengthen bonds between people, and food doesn't have to take center stage. Engage in good conversations and concentrate on really getting to know someone. Over the holidays, plan non-food-based activities like volunteering, attending parades, kids' arts and crafts, pumpkin patches, and cultural events. Get together with friends for healthy walks and sports activities. You'll appreciate new traditions and make lasting memories to cherish.

Set Limits and Stick to Them

Determine what you can do in specific, realistic time frames and commit only to what you know you can accomplish without making yourself crazy. Remember: It doesn't help anyone when you're stressed out and off track with your positive lifestyle. When time gets tight, make sure you have plenty of your favorite Medifast Meals within easy reach so you don't skimp on healthy, filling nutrition.





Care For Yourself

Imagine yourself at the next celebration glowing with calm happiness and sparkling health. You can be that person when you treat yourself well, with thoughtful nutrition, plenty of water, regular calorie-burning exercise, and healthy sleep every night. When others see you at your best, you're carrying a powerful message about living well—and that's something to celebrate.

Inspire Others

If being unhealthy has caused you to avoid the spotlight at social events in the past, you can find yourself a little nervous about joining the party. People may notice your positive changes in both appearance and attitude. Relax and enjoy the chance to model healthy behaviors such as wise nutrition choices. People may even ask you what you're doing. Why not share your secret: healthier living with Medifast!



When You're the Host or Hostess

Modify Your Favorites

When you're cooking food yourself, you don't have to give up traditional party favorites when you can make healthier versions of them. Mashed cauliflower makes a tasty alternative to mashed potatoes. Try sautéing in broth instead of butter. Use sugar- and fat-free ingredients whenever you can. If you're giving out treats at Halloween, try packets of pretzels, peanuts, or sugar-free gum so you don't have a lot of "fun-sized" temptation haunting your home.

Ask For (and Accept) Help

Encourage your friends and family to get involved in the planning and dole out some tasks. Send your spouse to the store (with a very specific list!) while the kids clean assigned areas of your home. Don't be afraid to ask your guests to bring a dish for all to enjoy. And when someone offers to take on a favor, say yes!

Be Leery of Leftovers

When you're cleaning up, if possible, delegate the task of packaging leftovers to someone else while you wash dishes, sweep up, or take out the trash. Send cake, pie, and extra goodies home with friends or take them in to the office for co-workers. For healthy items, portion them out into ready-made Lean & Green™ Meal portions and refrigerate or freeze them to save you time later.

Procrastinate with Purpose

If you're baking or preparing calorie-rich foods for a gathering, wait and do so at the last minute so you spend less time looking at and smelling them.

Focus on Your Non-Faves

If you're preparing party food, make it something that's easier for you to resist. For example, if your weakness is chocolate, go with fruit. Not a huge fan of coconut or licorice? Bake macaroons or anise-flavored cookies.



Using Your Head:

Behavioral Tricks to Keep You on Track

Emotions and Eating

Holidays, parties, and other events are often a combination of fun, food, and emotion. Whether you're watching your favorite team compete in the championship, sitting down for a Thanksgiving feast, or celebrating your daughter's wedding day, good food usually accompanies good feelings.

Emotions play an important role in our eating patterns. At big events, we eat to create or enhance pleasurable feelings: to bond with others, to recapture the past, and to comfort ourselves.

But just as real is the other side of the story: Out-of-control eating creates great emotional pain for many of us. Years of unhealthy choices have made us feel unhappy, tired, discouraged, and even ashamed.

The trick is to learn how to experience the good feelings without overeating. This takes time, so be gentle with yourself and seek progress, not perfection.

Being Prepared

If you're on a healthy eating plan, parties and events will put your commitment to the test.

What if someone offers me my favorite food?

What if someone gives me a hard time about my choices?

What if my in-laws start to stress me out?

What if I am bored or tired?

By mentally "walking yourself through" the situations you're likely to encounter at the event, you'll be better prepared to handle them with serenity. With a little commitment, handling food-laden social festivities will become easier and more enjoyable.

Write Your Intentions

Develop a plan of action using the form below.

My plan of action for _____
(EVENT)

Date and time: _____

My goals for this event:

1. Stay committed to my weight loss and maintenance programs and my health goals.

2. (List other objectives) _____

3. (List other objectives) _____

Potential challenges to my health goals:

How I will respond to them:



Control What You Can: *Your Surroundings*

You may not have a say in what's served at a party or whether or how your second cousin behaves at the dinner table. But there are some techniques you can use to manage your surroundings so stress and unhealthy habits stay in check.

A Buddy

A great way to navigate celebrations is to stick close to someone who understands and supports what you're trying to do. If your host or hostess is someone close to you, you might even ask them to help you by providing a healthy food option for you. If a friend, spouse, or family member isn't available in person at the event, you might have someone available to call for a few seconds of support—or even text—if you're feeling overwhelmed. Just knowing someone is in your corner cheering for your success can be tremendously powerful.

Avoidance

Getting out of the way of temptation is not a sign of weakness or poor self-control, but rather an intelligent response to avoid problems, especially when you're in the early stages of learning to eat healthy. If there's a buffet, a trusted friend or family member can go get your food for you. If there's a dessert table in one room, you can stay out. When cake is served, you can politely excuse yourself.

Visualization

Like an athlete preparing for a big game, you can use visualization to rehearse the behavior and outcome you'd like to have happen. Use your imagination to mentally "see" yourself politely declining the offer of a second helping, explaining to a family member that you're going to pass on cocktails, or getting up to dance when the desserts are passed around.

Reminders

Set up positive, motivating messages on your cell phone to pop up during the event, or write them down on small slips of paper to hide in your purse or pocket. Some ideas:

You're doing this for your kids—and future grandkids.

No food tastes better than healthy feels.

Your spouse is so proud of your success.

You're one step closer to your goal.

You're becoming your true self every day.



Control What You Can: *Yourself*

The best way to get through a tough situation is to adjust how we respond to it. Here are some powerful behavior modification tools recommended by experts and easy to use—at parties and events, or anywhere!

Breathe Deep

One of the easiest and most powerful ways to handle an unhealthy eating urge is to stop and take a few deep, cleansing breaths. Close your eyes and concentrate on slowly filling and emptying your lungs as your mind quiets down and you reboot your awareness. Open your eyes and continue enjoying yourself.

Distract Yourself

If you're thinking obsessively about the food, switch gears. Try joining an interesting conversation. Comment on the beautiful bride, the birthday boy, or your brother's new outdoor deck. Play a game with a child or reach out to someone on the sidelines.

"Urge Surf"

A food craving is like an ocean wave. It builds, crests, crashes gently onto shore, and fades away into the sand. As compelling as the urge is, it's temporary: If you don't give in, you'll find the feeling passes in a few minutes.

Walk it Out

Avoidance and physical activity give food cravings a practical one-two punch. Remove yourself from the temptation and take a walk then return to the event refreshed, re-energized, and ready for more fun.

Talk it Out

Talking about the urge to eat with someone who understands can provide relief as you recognize it's not a sign of weakness or failure to have these feelings from time to time. Plus, that person can give you valuable support as you stick to healthy choices.

Counterthink

Our inner dialogue can get us into trouble when we worry that refusing food or drinks will hurt or offend someone, or call attention to ourselves in a negative way. Likewise, we may tell ourselves that if we have a bite of cake, it's all over and we've failed in our attempt to get healthy once again. This negative self-talk can be counterbalanced by more constructive thoughts, such as, "It's going to be tough to avoid having dessert at this party, but I'll be okay. I have techniques I can use, and my health goals are definitely worth it."

Be Assertive

Say the worst happens—a pushy person pressures you to eat something you know isn't in line with your health goals. You can stand up for yourself: You have the right to be heard, and don't have to apologize or explain yourself to anyone. You can respectfully communicate your wishes, thoughts, and feelings, and not have to feel hopelessly at the mercy of anyone who doesn't understand how critical healthy eating is to your well-being. "Thanks, but no thanks: I'm completely committed to eating healthy right now."

IF ALL ELSE FAILS ...

Remember that good health is a marathon, not a sprint. One slip-up or ill-advised indulgence will not ruin your chances of long-term weight management IF you don't wait to get back on track. If you fall off the wagon, the best thing to do is get back on right away. The idea is to prevent an unhealthy decision from becoming a complete relapse into old eating habits.



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