

## Avoid Stress At Festive Gatherings

by Jennifer Gehlen, Au.D.

(NAPS)—Getting together with family and friends can be more enjoyable when you know you're hearing what's going on. Now, thanks to the latest technology, that may be easier.

### Problem

For people who would like to hear better, large gatherings can be challenging. Hearing loss occurs mostly at higher pitches, so they rely on low-pitch sounds in speech to understand conversations. People with hearing loss also rely on nonverbal cues.

Unfortunately, in large gatherings, all these cues can become compromised. There's often a variety of background noise that can drown out the sounds needed to understand conversation.

As a result, those with hearing loss have to pay extra-close attention and still catch only fragments of words and

sentences that they then have to piece together. It can be very tiring and lead to becoming withdrawn and socially isolated.

### Hearing Aids Can Help

Fortunately, modern digital hearing aids are designed to improve these stressful situations. Wearers can differentiate speech from noise, and the hearing aids suppress noise. In new smart hearing aids, noise-reduction algorithms are completely automatic and can target a variety of different sounds. They can even work fast enough to reduce the brief pockets of noise between natural pauses in words and sentences. This makes listening in difficult situations more comfortable and less stressful.

Smart hearing aids with directional microphone technology pick up sounds primarily from the front, since you're most likely facing the person you're talking to. Some even activate automatically and adapt to various sound environ-



Thanks to today's technology, many people can hear better than ever before.

ments. When hearing aids are worn as a pair, directional microphones work together to sharpen the focus. In really noisy conditions, this technology has been clinically proven to let wearers un-

derstand speech even better than listeners with normal hearing.

### Use Communication Strategies

Advanced hearing aid technology can help tremendously but some simple strategies can make communicating even easier:

- If the location of the event is within your control, minimize background noise. Consider having the party in a place that's relatively quiet and request a table in a more secluded area.
- Remind people to get your attention first and face you when speaking. Position yourself in a well-lit area with your back to the windows and face the person you're speaking with.
- Finally, relax. Even those with normal hearing often miss a few words.

Dr. Gehlen is an audiologist and educational specialist for Signia.

# Holiday Hints

## Eating Healthy Around The Holidays: Eight Tips To Help

(NAPS)—With all the fun the holidays can bring, it can be challenging to stick to healthy routines. Eight tips can help.

### The Problem

"If you have trouble making healthy food choices and getting enough physical activity during the holidays, you are not alone," said Elaine Auld, chief executive officer of the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE).

Eating healthy is hard to do when celebrations with family and friends so often revolve around food. Add a packed social calendar and travel time to see loved ones, and you have the perfect recipe for adding on the pounds.

### Some Answers

Auld says there is a lot you can do to stay healthy without giving up the holiday fun. Small changes can make a big difference in helping you eat healthier and get enough physical activity. Here are some ideas to get you started:

**Focus on portion size.** You don't have to skip your favorite holiday foods—just eat less. For example, if your family does a buffet-style meal, have one helping about the size of a deck of cards instead of two.

**Try lower-calorie versions of holiday treats.** Simple changes to your favorite recipes can make them a lot healthier. Try replacing full-fat cream cheese with light cream cheese in your go-to dessert.

**Enjoy all the food groups** at your celebration and share healthier options during your holiday meals. Serve whole grain crackers with hummus as an appetizer. Add unsalted nuts and black beans to a green-leaf salad. Include fresh fruit at the dessert table. Use low-



Enjoying such traditional holiday treats as fruit and nuts can also be a good way to keep eating healthfully.

fat milk instead of heavy cream in your casseroles.

**Make sure your protein is lean.** Turkey, lean roast beef, beans and some types of fish, such as cod or flounder, are lean protein choices. Trim fat when cooking meats.

**Dip lightly when it comes to sauces.** Go easy on the sauces and gravies. They can be high in calories, saturated fat and sodium.

**Bake healthier.** Use recipes with unsweetened applesauce or mashed ripe bananas instead of butter. Try cutting the amount of sugar listed in recipes in half. Use spices to add flavor such as cinnamon, allspice or nutmeg instead of salt.

**Cheers to good health.** Quench your thirst with low-calorie options. Drink water with lemon or lime slices. Offer seltzer water with a splash of 100 percent fruit juice.

**Find time for physical activity.** Remember, just 10 minutes of physical activity is better than none. Try taking a quick walk with your fami-

ly after a holiday meal. Park farthest away from the store when doing holiday shopping.

"Making healthier choices around the holidays can help you feel better, have more energy and even manage holiday stress," said Auld.

SOPHE is working alongside four organizations with a network in 97 communities across 37 states. The other partners include the American Heart Association (AHA), the American Planning Association (APA), the Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE) and the National WIC Association (NWICA).

Communities can take more steps to encourage healthy eating and physical activity at the holidays. "Community walks or races encourage people to get outside this time of year. When organizations sponsor a 'healthy makeover' contest for holiday recipes, they are really encouraging people to think in new ways about their favorite foods," said Auld.

### Learn More

Find facts about the national project to prevent chronic disease at [www.partnering4health.org](http://www.partnering4health.org) and get 10 tips for healthy holiday eating at [www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-make-healthier-holiday-choices](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-make-healthier-holiday-choices).

### Further Information

This program is made possible through a grant provided to the Society for Public Health Education as part of Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) DP14-1418: National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention, as part of a three-year cooperative agreement between the participating partners.

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles he has overcome trying to succeed.

—Booker T. Washington

Vulnerabilities, like being embarrassed or risking love, can be terrifying. I think we should follow a simple rule; if we can take the worst, take the risk.

—Dr. Joyce Brothers

To persevere, trusting in what hopes he has, is courage in a man.

—Euripides

In the game of life it's a good idea to have a few early losses, which relieves you of the pressure of trying to maintain an undefeated season.

—Bill Vaughan

We learn courageous action by going forward whenever fear urges us back. A little boy was asked how he learned to skate. "By getting up every time I fell down," he answered.

—David Seabury

Victory is not won in miles, but in inches. Win a little now, hold your ground, and later win a little more.

—Louis L'Amour

The world is moved not only by the mighty shoves of the heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

—Helen Keller

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## Good Luck

DEBRA BASSANI found the Tie Month graphic on page 6B (TR Hunter – 2216 Primrose Lane – Right of bush by sidewalk – about the middle of photo). She won a gift certificate to The Chicken Coop

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