

BELLA

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All things beautiful — inside and out

La Crosse dietitian and author Jill Fleming shares strategies for eating sensibly without missing out on all the fun



PETER THORSON/LA CROSSE TRIBUNE

Jill Fleming makes sure her party guests have plenty of healthy choices, such as low-fat dip, pretzels and vegetables.

HOLIDAY PARTY FOOD BUFFET

SURVIVING THE

By **JENNY DOLAN**
La Crosse Tribune

TRY THESE NICE ALTERNATIVES
TO NAUGHTY HOLIDAY FOODS

Finger foods. Dairy desserts. Smells of chocolate, cinnamon and fried chicken. The buffet calls to you from across the room, tempting and taunting you. The hostess begs you to eat more.

Your girlfriends stand in a circle around you, munching eggrolls and sipping eggnog.

There's nowhere to hide — holiday parties are where diets go to die.

"There are so many choices," said Jenny Severson of La Crosse. "It's overwhelming. You read all this advice, like make sure your plate is two-thirds full of vegetables. You try to remember that."

Holiday parties are especially challenging for women, said Jill Fleming, a La Crosse registered dietitian and author of "Thin People Don't Clean Their Plates."

Many women take the "all or nothing" approach.

One pretzel, soaked in dip, leads to an entire bag. You've already ruined your diet for today, so why not keep eating?

You'll be "good" tomorrow. You'll start over in January.

"This is thinking like an overweight person," Fleming said. "This encourages the continued pattern of bingeing and fasting."

Men are not so in tune with being "good" or "bad," Fleming said. "You don't hear about a man saying, 'I pigged out on the brownies.'"

The "all or nothing" mentality slows your metabolism, Fleming said, and contributes to the extra weight most Americans gain between Thanksgiving and the start of the new year.

"You can't have the 'all or nothing' mentality during the holidays," she said. "Every couple of weeks, you've got an occasion."

Fleming recommends adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet during the holidays instead of denying yourself tasty holiday treats.

"When you start putting vegetables into your diet, it automatically displaces some of the junk," she said.

If you have a sweet tooth, eat fruit before the party.

NAUGHTY
Spinach dip

NICE
Guacamole (it's heart healthy)

Chips

Pretzels (fewer calories)

Cheesecake

Cookie (anything's better than cheesecake)

Dip

Bring your own dip using low-fat sour cream and light mayonnaise

Eggnog

Holiday Nog by Kemp's. Just 3 grams of fat per cup

Cookies with thick icing

Cookies with colored sugar



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

HOLIDAY PARTY TIPS

1. Don't give yourself permission to eat whatever you want, and then go on a diet later.
2. Don't skip meals to "save up" for the big party. Eat breakfast and eat an hour before the party so you won't be ravenous.
3. To avoid dehydration, alternate between alcohol and water. Drinking too much alcohol might make you eat more.
4. Don't socialize near the buffet table.
5. Never chew chocolate. Let it melt in your mouth.

Source: Jill Fleming of La Crosse, registered dietitian

Simple Chocolate Mousse

1/2 cups skim milk
1 package (4-serving size) instant chocolate-flavor pudding mix
2 cups thawed Cool Whip Lite whipped topping

Pour milk into medium bowl. Add pudding mix. Beat with wire whisk 1 minute. Gently stir in whipped topping. Spoon into 6 dessert dishes. Garnish with crushed Oreos if desired.

From the kitchen of Jill Fleming