

Faith: Is it even possible to stick to a healthy diet around the holidays? Welcome to SBH Bronx Health Talk produced by SBH Health System and broadcast it from the beautiful studios at Saint Barnabas Hospital in the Bronx. I'm Faith Daniel. The holiday season is an opportunity to spend time with family and friends and enjoy the festivities with food being a big factor in many cultures. It can be difficult and feel almost impossible to not splurge and stick to a healthy diet with us today is Elisa Ramos Nutrition Coordinator and Anne Louie. Dietitian Representatives from SBH Wick Program to provide tips on how to enjoy the holiday festivities in a health conscious way. Welcome and Elisa and Ann.

*Hi. thank you for having us.Thank you.*

Faith: so let's just jump right in and could you tell me a little bit about WIC and what nutrition services are offered for our participants. First.

*Elisa: Well, WIC is a Woman Infant Children Supplemental Food program, and we offer a various services from Nutritional we offer breastfeeding service. We offer various referrals to other programs to help mothers in health care providers, OBGYNs breastfeeding support. Additionally, within Saint Barnabas as well as within our program, and we also do collaborative referrals with other programs that provide a cribs play pins and other services as well. So we encompass a whole variety of services and once you become a participant with us, we can provide those services for our clients.*

Faith: Alright so. Let's jump right into our hot topic today, which is eating healthier on the holidays. so how can somebody prepare for something like that?

*Elisa: Best thing, I think to start off with is a plan of a menu knowing in advance what you're gonna plan to cook what ingredients you're gonna need during your time duration. This way you can not only plan with your time efficiency, but also you can save a few dollars if you shop in advance. In addition to that, knowing who the guests are how many people you're gonna have. If you're gonna decorate, you know just encompassing all those little ideas. It can be a little bit stressful, but you wanna try to minimize the stress on that.*

*Anne: I think another good way is to especially on the day of. Let's say you're going to a holiday party, a lot of times people cannot eat the entire day and then wait to have a big feast for dinner.*

*But that's not exactly the best way to do it because you tend to overeat and overdo it when you're starving the entire day so I would recommend to eat your breakfast and lunch normally as you do. If anything add a little bit of fiber into your breakfast and lunch, just kinda keep you full and then when you go for dinner, you'll be hungry but you won't be starving and eat everything that's on sight.*

Faith: How would you recommend somebody organize their plate you know because sometimes you just wanna do like all the rice or like all the chickens and they would be like forget the vegetables so how should somebody organize the plate or how can they be more conscious about it?

*Elisa: Well they should obviously, if they're not starving themselves, you know and eating with their eyes, they should organize the plate, at least a third of vegetables. It could be you know, carrots and asparagus mixtures. A third of the plate should be green leafy vegetables or any kind of you know sides that are vegetables and then maybe a small portion of rice or pasta, a portion of a chicken or Beef, depending on what the host has there as well, but for the holidays, people tend to eat with their eyes like a buffet then they overdue it as well as forgetting about that there's also desserts. So you need to portion it ideally for yourself to make a little bit room for the dessert for the holidays. And there's also ideas for the children as well.*

*Anne: The best, like what you are saying about eating with your eyes. Another good thing is if you're eating with your eyes, what is best, kind of to choose things that are more colorful because it's gonna be more appetizing. When you see a plate that is nice with all these, you know, green peppers, red peppers fruits strawberries, that's gonna look more appealing to you and that's also good for children too. because if they see all these colorful fruits, shapes and sizes, they're gonna be more into that, whereas if there's just one color. We eat with the eyes. You're going to be more inclined to eat it.*

Faith: That's a good point, especially as long as it looks good and if it's healthy, it's like the bonus points, you see it.

*Elisa: Absolutely and I would also recommend if you're the host and you're the*

*one that's doing all the cooking, besides the preparation time. Don't pick on it, don't taste it. Just you know have something to eat beforehand. So already full and you don't have to worry about. I'm hungry. Let me taste this. This is where the host is able to enjoy the meals with their family and friends when they came over as well.*

Faith: For the host the person that's making this a huge meal, you have any recommendations for them on like ingredients or any substitutes that you would recommend to make things a little healthier?

*Anne: You can definitely have certain things. You can have a lower fat content. If you're making mac and cheese, you can go for maybe one percent milk instead of whole milk. You can also go for the lower fat cheese compared to the full-fat cheese, especially since you're mixing all these ingredients together. It's gonna be hard to tell between the higher fat or the lower fat. Substitute portion of the cream cheese, if you're making cheesecake, for some Greek yogurt. You're still gonna add. you're not taking everything out, but you're adding something to kinda replace part of it so that it's slightly lower in fat content or calorie content.*

*Elisa: I would also recommend if you gonna try to venture and substitute items practice beforehand because this way you'll know if you like it, if you enjoy, if it might be a little, too much, maybe a little bit, you know too little. You don't wanna surprise your guest by being creative on the day of or even if you're a person that's bringing something over. You don't want people to dislike what you've brought so a good idea is to try it, make it beforehand. This way you work out those things with the foods as well.*

Faith: It's a very good point. You don't want it to be like a tester.

*Elisa: Right. And don't ask that person to cook again!*

Faith: And for those of us that say, like me to be on a strict diet that can't bend

say if you have like a chronic illness or if you're struggling with diabetes and like we really wanna be strategic about your planning. how would you recommend they deal with like the peer pressure or just like dealing with their own feelings. Feeling left out or something.

*Elisa: Well, Hopefully those individuals have already spoken to their health care providers and they already been on a some sort of strict regime, and they should already know what they can and cannot eat. There are some exceptions, Some substitutions that you can eat but again you have to know what your limits are and make the right choices. There are possibilities that you can indulge a little bit here and there, but not overdo it simply because everyone is there.*

*Anne: And I think also it's communicate with the host to let them know. Hey, I have these dietary restrictions. Is there something that we can work out and you don't wanna offend anybody like Oh, I can't eat this. I can't eat that. If your host really can't accommodate you, I think you can also bring a dish. You know that, at least you can eat it and not feel left out.*

*Elisa: And that also works if you have food allergies. A lot of individuals have food allergy these days. A lot of children do as well. So again if the host is not one of those individuals that cannot accommodate. You definitely, you can bring your own little holiday servings or treats or whatever it is to appease your own food habits.*

Faith: It sounds like an important factor of this is just portion control and not eating with your eyes being conscious...

*Elisa: Also to include I'm sorry Faith, to include in, that is, water. Water is a great addition to any meal beforehand, during after and also will give you that sense of fullness as well. So this way you don't overeat even if you eat with your eyes and you grab that big plate. You're able to drink water in between foods and it will help*

*you get that fullness sensation faster and another thing also is to eat slowly. Savor their food enjoy the food because that will also help. Feeling of fullness is much better than eating faster and then you won't end up, or have that tendency to go for that second plate of food.*

Faith: How does one stick to this diet like after the holidays, you know, sometimes it feels like you're on like a high and then you just like you know you're dropping down and then like there it goes like the New Year's resolution. But like what to do. so, how does one like stick with that? And do you have any like snack ideas as well that are kinda like highly recommend as well?

*Anne: I think that the important thing is not to feel overly guilty about it because I think that's where everyone's downfall is. It's oh I had this. I had this second slice of pumpkin pie I might as well, continue eating more and more food because already messed up so I think that just not feeling as guilty as you should be because you're in a holiday with your family be with friends. You're having a good time to just kinda embrace that okay. This is something that even if you do overdo it don't feel that okay, I need to continue on this downward spiral until the holidays and because that's where it just catches up to you. If you keep continuing day after day overdoing it then it's not where you wanna be. You will reach your holiday goals or anything like that.*

Faith: Any snack ideas that are holiday theme for adults or children.

*Anne: So some healthy options with snack ideas is you know just if you are making chicken wings for instance, instead of frying them, you can bake them if you are putting out appetizers instead of going for a regular crackers, white crackers You can go for wheat crackers together with a dose of fiber. You can also you know have fruits and vegetables in shape cuts accordingly and to provide some you know color and variety for children.*

Faith: What does WIC do around like nutrition? Specifically, I know you guys just recently had your

supermarket trip, which was so exciting and I don't know if you wanna talk a little bit about that and what it was like.

*Elisa: Well the shopping experiments was an experience overall, it was an experiment not only for the staffers that went with the participants, but also for the vendors as well and we all kinda learn something from each other there and it was a great experience. More so for participants, they were able to learn how to use the application WIC2go which we highly recommend for all the participants, there's a scanner in there. We were able to show them the listing of the various foods. And with the vendor, they were not aware of certain foods that are actually acceptable that they didn't even know is offered, but now we'll offer it along the future. So it was a great experience, overall.*

Faith: How does one stick to their routine after the holidays and how can SBH WIC support someone on their nutrition journey?

*Elisa: So upon a participant qualifying for our WIC services, they will come to see one of the nutritionist and they'll get a one -to- one conversation. The nutritionist will do a nutritional and health assessment, which encompasses various medical questions and nutritional questions and then based on that information the nutritionist will sort of help guide the participant in whatever services they need Anne can give you a nice example of that.*

*Anne: With the nutrition education we do provide like a one -on- one service. So depending on your goals, whether you wanna lose weight, gain weight, we're trying to get more info related to physical activity. We can work with you, regarding set goals that are feasible for yourself. Not just a general, okay. you know, run 30 minutes outside every day. It has to be around your schedule because everyone is different so depending on if you have a busy schedule, I have to schedule. The nutritionist can work with you to achieve the goals that you want to particularly achieve.*

*Elisa: And it's all based upon the participants needs at that moment and if they have multiple children or themselves or their breastfeeding mom, their goals and your needs might change every time they come to see us. So we work with them on that one to one basis.*

Faith: Any helpful resources our website our audience could check out they wanna learn more about healthy eating I know I've heard of my plate I don't know if you wanna talk a little bit about that too.

*Anne: My plate is definitely a good tool and it's really simple because it really just shows you a plate and it divides the plate up exactly how they recommend you to eat. Half of them being fruits and vegetables and then a quarter of it being whole grains and then the other quarter lean protein and varies on the side and it's just kind of a straightforward way for you to visually see how your plate should look like and within that website itself, it kinda breaks down different activities and different resources, additional resources like they have a lot of information about foods and fruits and vegetables all that so that's a really good website. Another website is The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which is something where they go into. They provide a lot of articles that are really straight forward to read and there's even articles for pregnant women, for breastfeeding women, for moms with children. All that. They have just general guidelines, food safety, holiday eating, tips.*

*Elisa: As well as to my plate website, New York State has websites as well that person can go on there and search even for WIC information, you can search in your for healthy recipes their principal recipes. They also provide substitution examples as well as participants comment or with individuals come and join our program. We have great handouts as well and we also can provide various substitutions for the WIC.*

Faith: Awesome. Thank you, Elisa and Anne for joining us on SBH Bronx Health Talk. For more information on our WIC services or to make an appointment, please call 718 901 9510 or visit them on SBHNY.org/WIC. Thank you for joining us.

Elisa and Anne: Thank you so much.