

Here's some scary food for thought: to gain five pounds from now to the end of January, all you have to do is eat an average of 200 calories per day more than you need -- an ounce of fudge here, an ounce of gravy there, some pecan pie. If you need to 'get a grip' on eating splurges, the winter holiday months are key to your long range planning.

Dietitian Jennifer Wood of Gunderson Lutheran says the holidays typically encourage people to indulge in high-fat, high-calorie foods that are low in nutrients, and this is also the time we're most likely to make excuses for skipping exercise.

She says you should keep up your regular exercise during the holidays and accept no excuses. When endorphins are high, you'll cope better with stress, and regular exercise boosts endorphins.