

# - FACT SHEET -

from the Chooz to Looz Weight Loss Program  
[www.milhamdietitians.com](http://www.milhamdietitians.com)

## HOW TO GET THROUGH THE SILLY SEASON AND NOT PUT ON WEIGHT

Diet Tips from the Chooz to Looz® Program

### Introduction

If you are like most people, you will put on around 3kgs during the Christmas/New Year break. But this doesn't need to be the case. With the tips below, you will be able to manage to maintain your current weight and if you are lucky, even lose weight, over the 'Silly Season'.

It's not just Christmas Day you need to worry about. Christmas really starts from the beginning of November and ends at the end of January. From the beginning of November, we often experience Christmas break-ups and work parties. Christmas foods are out in shops and we are out buying presents. Our lives become more hectic, school breaks up, more parties, extra foods in the house that aren't ordinarily there, gifts given, gifts bought, left-overs from Christmas day, more parties, more alcohol, continuing through to New Year's Eve.

Then comes children on holidays, more outings and meals eaten out, less structure to meal times and often holidays away, where food choice may be limited. People also associate holidays with a time of relaxing and eating more, or differently, to what they normally would. After school goes back, things often settle back to normal, for most people, however, they are often left with an extra 3kgs that they didn't have before.

### TIP 1: Prioritise Your Indulgences

When you are trying to control your weight, you need to manage how many and which extra or indulgent type foods you have. If you are following the Chooz to Looz Weight Loss Program, you will have an 'Extras Allowance' each week. You will need to 'save up' your 'Extras Allowance' for special occasions, parties or dinner parties, particularly if you feel you are going to indulge in foods such as a high fat menu choice, dessert, cake or alcohol. Pick your favourite and have them. For example, if you prefer to have a few glasses of wine and dessert, leave the nibbles, like dips, chips and lollies.

Plan ahead and prioritise your extras for special occasions, rather than have them on a daily basis. Don't use Christmas as a license to 'pig out'. In between your social events, follow your usual daily menu plans, as best as you can.



*For more information on the Chooz to Looz program, please visit us online at [www.milhamdietitians.com](http://www.milhamdietitians.com) or telephone us on (08) 8377 2298*

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## TIP 2: Managing Eating Out

Whether you are grabbing a take-away, attending a party, or eating out at a restaurant, you will need to know how to make the wisest choice(s).

When eating out at people's places, be prepared and ideally, plan options to take with you. You may want to bring a plate of food you know you can eat, to help 'space out' the indulgent food. For example, you may like to take a platter filled with salad vegetables, such as carrot, capsicum and celery sticks, with a low fat dip (or cheese) and crackers. Alternatively, you may like to make some healthy, low-sugar, low-fat cakes or muffins and take those with you. The *Australian Healthy Cooking Guide* contains lots of healthy dips, cakes and muffins you may like to make, that will not only tempt your tastebuds, but also fill your stomach and prevent you from wanting the other, more fattening foods.

Take your own drinks, such as soda, mineral water or diet soft drinks. If you do drink alcohol, control how much you drink. Remember, the more low calorie options you have, the easier it will be to use your willpower and not be tempted.

## TIP 3: Managing Presents

Ideally, request alternative presents from your friends, family and workmates, to chocolates, nuts, biscuits, etc. if you can.

If you are given these products as gifts, the first option is to save them and consume them slowly over a period of time. If this is not possible, you have two more options; the first is to give them away; and the second is to open them when other people are present, so you can share your gift with others. Then any that are left over, give away.



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## TIP 4: Managing Holidays

If you go away, you will need to plan carefully. The ideal situation is if you organise your own catering and make your own food choices. It is more difficult, if you are relying on someone else's cooking or catering. However, if you do know your host(s) well, if you can talk to them beforehand about options that you would prefer. Be prepared and plan your food ahead and be as organised as you can.

Be careful that with more time on your hands, you don't spend this time eating. Keep temptations out of sight – out of mind – out of mouth. Remember the motto: -

**OUT OF SIGHT  
OUT OF HOUSE  
OUT OF MIND  
OUT OF MOUTH**

Holidays are often an unstructured time. If we have been used to working or studying and eating at regular hours, then this extra free time can sometimes create problems. Try to create structure in your day, with your activities and meals, keep busy and especially, try not to spend more time in the kitchen. Regular meals that are planned carefully will help prevent you reaching for the wrong food, or eating too much, due to being over hungry.

If you feel bored with extra time on your hands, plan extra hobbies or activities to do at these times. Make sure these activities are those that you enjoy and can pursue when the time arises. Remember, it is better to prevent boredom, than to try to manage it when it strikes.

## TIP 5: Managing Extra Food in the House

Limit temptation, otherwise you risk overindulging. Typical Christmas foods such as mince pies, christmas puddings, cakes, nuts, lollies, shortbread biscuits and chocolate, should be restricted, particularly if you think you might overindulge.

If you have to get them into the house, for other family members, get them at the latest possible time and put them in a place where you do not see them. Then, if there are leftovers after the big day, possibly give them away.



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## TIP 6: Managing People

We need to know how to manage people who offer us foods, that we really don't want to consume, but at the same time, we do not want to hurt their feelings.

Many special occasions are centred around food and feasting and Christmas is one of them. It is quite unconsciously recognised by all, as the symbol of love, welcome, friendship and caring. If you refuse food that is offered to you, in a way that upsets the person offering, you may feel guilty and mean. There are methods to cope with this situation, without consuming what you do not wish to and without offending the other person.

There are three ways to deal with food and drink offers, and which one you choose is up to you, the person who is offering and the particular situation. You will need to understand the different options available to you, before you can decide which approach is best. The approach you use in one situation, may vary from the next. You have to be the judge and weigh up: -

1. How you feel and what you want
2. How well you know the other person and what type of person they are
3. The particular social situation you are involved in

**The first option** is to be assertive by accepting the affection of the person offering, but then refusing the food offer, for example: By saying "Thank you for thinking of me.....but....." or "That's kind of you.....but.....no thank you, I couldn't fit in another bite."

Then 'redirect' their affection so that they can still "give you something." Show them something you are willing to accept from them, for example: "I will have a soda water with you" or "I'd love a cup of tea, but nothing to eat thank you."

If somebody is in the habit of bringing you chocolates, or cake, suggest they bring you instead some of your favourite luxury fruits of the season, like mangoes, a bunch of flowers, a new CD or a book. Alternatively, you may prefer that they do something special for you. For example, you could ask that they cook dinner for you or give you a massage.

**The second option** is to use escape techniques. If you feel emotionally that you really want to accept the food or drink as you will hurt the other person's feelings offering, then there are ways of accepting but then disposing of the food or drink. This option is often easiest when the particular social situation allows for you to accept but not be 'watched closely' afterwards. The following scenarios are three examples which will give you a few ideas.



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1. *At a dinner party, you are offered dessert. Ask the hostess to "save it" for you in the fridge for later, as "I couldn't fit another mouth full in just now." For you, later never comes and the dessert is forgotten.*
2. *You are offered afternoon tea, a piece of Christmas cake at a friend's house. Explain to your friend that you have just eaten out, or had a large lunch or feel a little unwell just now, but, would love to take it home and have it for supper. For you, you can either take it and put it in the bin when you get home, offer it to a friend or family member or feed it to the birds.*
3. *You are at a party and supper is served, and all that is available is pastries, cakes and biscuits. You are not hungry and do not want to use any of your extras (or indulgences). Every one is eating. You are offered cake by the hostess who explains in a lot of detail how long it took her to make them and how delicious they are. You decide to take one or two, but walk on and put the plate (still with the cakes on it) down somewhere or offer your cakes to your friend/partner, or pop them into the bin later. No one will notice, everyone is happy and you have not eaten what you didn't want!*

**The third option** is to accept the offer. If you desire a particular food or drink for what ever reason, then you can still have it, but eat it slowly, savouring every mouthful and without diluting the eating experience with other activities such as watching television, working or driving. If you are following the Chooz to Looz Weight Loss Program, you will need to count this as one of your weekly extras from your indulgence allowance. This option may be one that you may choose if you feel emotionally that you want to accept the food or drink, as you would hurt the other person's feelings who is offering – and you cannot escape. For example, if you are visiting an Aunt, who doesn't see you very often and has made a cake, especially of you, knowing that you would like it, you may find it difficult to say no. So, choose a small slice, rather than eat several. Remember, it is the first mouthful that always tastes the best, so make it last as long as possible in your mouth.

## TIP 7: Motivation

So many people have the knowledge, but often not the motivation, to carry their goals through. Some people call it willpower and it is what people want often when they are surrounded by temptation. They know they shouldn't, but they do. And then one often leads to more, due to guilt.

You need to remember your long-term goals for weight loss or weight control and remember these at the time, when you are faced with your favourite high kilojoule foods.



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You also need to remember your list of reasons for losing or controlling your weight, to keep your motivation strong. If you think you may weaken, particularly review your reasons before attending a party or a dinner, where you may be tempted.

## **When temptation is only an arm's length away**

You may find yourself faced with more temptation around the Christmas/New Year break. Here are some tips with managing this: -

1. Before eating a tempting food, run through your prepared list of reasons for losing weight and refer to your list. Ask yourself, "Do I really want those empty kilojoules now, more than I want to wear shorts this summer?" Ideas repeated over and over to yourself can have as much effect as those which have been planted while in a hypnotic trance.
2. **Taste with your mind.**  
After one mouthful, the rest tastes the same anyway! Close your eyes and imagine the taste of the food without actually eating it. Our tastebuds have a memory too. Learn how to use it, now that was nice wasn't it and it didn't even cost a calorie. Ask yourself, if you did choose to consume this particular food how would you feel afterwards? A little guilty? Now think how you would feel if you choose not to eat it! Great, strong, IN CONTROL! The more you learn to control food (than food controlling you) the easier it will become to say "no" with no remorse.
3. **"A second on the lips, a lifetime on the hips"**  
Remember this slogan. Is a few seconds of pleasure worth the effort? Compare the immediate, temporary, short term pleasure of the food with the ultimate enjoyment of the longer term permanent achievement of your desirable weight.
4. **Eat like a gourmet!**  
If after going through the above three steps, you still want that particular food, fine, eat a little, slowly, but enjoy and count as one (or even half) of your indulgences or extras. The longer food stays in our mouth, the more satisfied we get. Once we swallow it, it is gone - we don't have tastebuds in our throats or stomachs! Make the most of the food in your mouth. Chew slowly. Let the tastebuds derive their full pleasure. Eat like a gourmet. You will eat less as a result, but enjoy more.



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