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The holiday season can result in weight gain if you do not have a plan for healthy eating and physical activity. Both of these things can be difficult during this busy time of the year. The key to success is to have a plan and create a habit for both good nutrition and physical activity.

Healthy eating is challenging, especially if it includes eating away from home. During COVID, this may look different. Let's tackle issues both eating away from home and when you are at home. Eating away from home is a challenge because you do not have any control over the selected items. You do have control over how much you take of each item. You also have control as to what you are putting on your plate even when you are away from home. Most of the time when attending holiday functions, you will have a nice mixture of healthy and not so healthy choices. You can use a reminder of Go Foods: those that are 100% healthy, Slow Down Foods: those that you should choose less often but they do have some things about them that are healthy. A great example would be pudding. While it is dairy, there is sugar in it, so you may have some, but slow down on the amount of pudding. Think about how often you should chose to eat pudding versus a healthier choice like low fat yogurt. The last category is Whoa Foods; these are foods with no nutritional value. Examples would be a sugary drink like punch, cookies and candy. A good thing to remind yourself, there is never a food that we would say not to eat, just in moderation. So, indulge in your favorite divinity or fudge, just take smaller amounts and add more fruits and vegetables on your plate.

What about physical activity? This is such a busy time of the year, how do I fit that in? This is where accountability can be of help. Find a workout friend, even if it is just to check in daily with a text or email and report what you did for your 30 minutes of exercise. I have started a holiday accountability group on Facebook. It is a way to set goals, get helpful tips and form healthy habits for reaching your physical activity goals. You will find the Buffalo County NEP Page here: <https://www.facebook.com/BuffaloCountyNEP/> and the Holiday Accountability Challenge event page is here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/381252679872306/>. I will be running the current event through December 9 and then I will begin another one to run through the end of the year. Daily, you will receive healthy tips and a place to share your successes and to make a plan to increase your physical activity.

“The miracle isn’t that I finished, the miracle is that I had the courage to start.” What are you willing to do today that will create lasting habits that will result in a healthy lifestyle for you and your family? Begin with the end in mind and get moving! Happy Holidays from my office to your home! If you have any questions, feel free to email me. Check out my Facebook page and follow along to reach your goals. Also check out <https://food.unl.edu/> for all your holiday food and fitness questions.