



An Affiliate of National Dairy Council

Fact Sheet

Enjoying the Holiday Season ... Food and All

Results from a study completed at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), showed that adults gain almost one pound in the six week interval between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day – and typically the weight doesn't come off. As a result, more weight is accumulated year after year.

Ohio has adult obesity rates of 24.9 percent, ranking it the 15th heaviest state in the nation, according to an August 2006 report by Trust for America's Health (TFAH). In addition, Ohio ranks 10th in the nation for adult diabetes levels (8.2 percent) and 19th for rates of hypertension (26.7 percent).

Statistics from 2004 for the United States show that coronary heart disease is the single leading cause of death in America (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey). The Centers for Disease Control recommend getting 30 minutes of exercise a day – and encouraging kids to do the same – to maintain weight and control stress, especially during the holiday season.

According to the Mayo Clinic, relationships, finances and physical demands are the three main trigger points of holiday stress and depression. Setting realistic expectations about visiting family and friends and sticking to a budget are two ways to reduce stress. Additionally, it is important not to abandon healthy habits. Overindulgence can increase guilt and stress.

According to the American Council of Science and Health, a hungry holiday eater can easily consume 2,000-plus calories at one sitting. In order to burn off 2,000 calories, a 155 lb person would have to jog for approximately four straight hours according to www.nutristrategy.com

Last year, a survey commissioned by Weight Watchers and conducted by Harris Interactive® showed that nearly half (45 percent) of U.S. women say losing weight was one of their New Year's resolutions for the upcoming year. Among those who will resolve to lose weight in the New Year, almost all (97 percent) say they think they will need some assistance to keep their resolution.

The celebration of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4,000 years ago. In the years around 2,000 BC, the Babylonian New Year began with the first New Moon (actually the first visible crescent) after the Vernal Equinox (first day of spring).

Traditional New Year foods are thought to bring luck. Many cultures believe that anything in the shape of a ring is good luck, because it symbolizes "coming full circle" – completing a year's cycle. For that reason, the Dutch believe that eating donuts on New Year's Day will bring good fortune. Other foods that are considered "lucky" are Black-eyed peas and other legumes, cabbage, rice and pork.