

# Drop a dress size by the holidays!

Look fabulous in time for the festive season

Christmas is just around the corner and we know you want to look your absolute best for the festive season. But, if you thought a month to drop a dress size was an unrealistic goal...think again! Registered dietician Tirsia Bezuidenhout, spokesperson for the Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA), says that healthy weight loss means losing about 0.5-1kg per week. 'Some of the most common hindrances to weight loss are depriving yourself to the point of over-indulging, skipping meals throughout the day, but consuming high-energy products when eating and using "low fat", "lite" or "weight loss" products without truly knowing what the product contains.' She shares her top tips to shed a few kilograms by the holidays in a safe (and sensible) way.

## How much weight do I need to lose in order to drop a dress size?

Although dress sizes vary according to weight and body shape, a weight loss of between 5-10kg equals a dress size. So, it's possible to lose a dress size in a seven-week period – between 1 November and Christmas – but this is highly dependent on individual body composition and maximum weight loss.

## Things to bear in mind...

Keep in mind that holidays, feasting and festivities kick off well before Christmas lunch. It's never feasible to starve excess weight off. Sustainable and healthy weight loss can be achieved by:

- ❖ Eating small portions regularly.
- ❖ Consuming foods from a variety of food groups.
- ❖ Planning meals ahead of time to avoid starvation-driven junk food choices.
- ❖ Limiting intake of processed and refined foods that generally contain fat, sugar, refined carbohydrates and salt, which can't be reduced.

## Food groups to keep...

High fibre/unrefined starch, fruit, vegetables, unsaturated fats, protein and a moderate amount of your favourite treat.

## Food groups to ditch...

Sugar, take-aways (of any kind) and alcohol.

## EATING OUT

### 7 things to consider before eating out...

- 1 Plan where you go and choose places that offer a variety of healthy meals.
- 2 Choose between an alcoholic drink or a dessert.
- 3 Opt for low-fat preparation methods: grilled/steamed/boiled/stir-fried.
- 4 Go for the side salad rather than chips.
- 5 Eat small portion sizes.
- 6 Choose meals that include a variety of food groups
- 7 Drink wisely: alcoholic, creamy, milky or high-sugar drinks are all high in energy and add unnecessary energy to your meal intake.

**When eating out, you have little control over the type or amount of fat used, the preparation, or the portion size, so it's not advisable to eat out too often when on the plan**

## The golden rules of any healthy eating plan

- ❖ Eat regularly – every three hours.
- ❖ Include at least two to three different food groups in every meal (a little of everything prevents too much of anything).
- ❖ Choose foods that are as unprocessed as possible and prepare as much of it as possible yourself.
- ❖ Try to avoid using more than one type of fat per meal (e.g. don't use avocado and salad dressing in the same meal.)  
Some common sources of fat are:
  - Margarine/butter
  - Peanut butter
  - Avocado • Salad dressing • Oil • Nuts
- ❖ Limit the amount of alcohol per day. The healthy amount of alcohol to consume on a daily basis is one unit for women and two units for men. One unit of alcohol is equal to any one of the following:
  - 120ml wine • 25ml whiskey/spirits/brandy • 340ml beerKeep in mind that spirit coolers and cocktails are particularly high in energy.
- ❖ Choose high-fibre, low-fat and low-sugar snacks.

## Keep moving

To lose weight, healthy eating and exercise go hand in hand! So remember to include at least 30 minutes of physical activity in your daily to-do list.

