

HEALTHY LIVING

Just say NO to
overeating

BY PHIL KLOER AND HELENA OLIVIERO

Cox News Service

When Kathy Ward found a recipe for Chocolate Creme Pumpkin Pie, she knew she just had to make it for Thanksgiving dinner. The recipe, however, was in a magazine in her doctor's waiting room, not too far from where she had just weighed in on those dreaded doctor's scales. (You know, the ones that are always set eight pounds heavy.)

Fortunately, Ward was down a few pounds on this visit (she lost 75 pounds in 2007 and has kept it off in 2008), so she copied the recipe and looks forward to making the pie. She'll have one slice — "a normal piece, not some diabetic sliver" — and that's all.

"People eat like crazy on Thanksgiving and Christmas," said Ward, a sixth-grade science teacher at Veterans Memorial Middle School in Covington, Ga., who runs a small pastry chef business on the side.

"You know, you're not on Death Row," she adds. "You can get more. They have these things called stores. Eat one meal, then wait awhile and do it again."

Such common-sense advice seems to fall on deaf, or maybe inattentive, ears during the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's, when temptations seem to multiply, including the temptation to postpone a diet until January.

The good news is it may not be as bad you think. The average American gains about one pound during the winter holiday season, far less than the five to eight pounds commonly believed, according to the National Institutes of Health.

But the bad news is that people often don't lose the weight and it can pile on

over the years. People who are overweight are more likely to gain five pounds during the holidays, according to the NIH.

Ward used to be among them. Diagnosed as "morbidly obese" by her doctor, she hooked up with a fitness contest called Rockdale Scale Down, joined a gym, and fell in love with the best-seller "You: On a Diet."

When she makes her chocolate pumpkin treat, for example, she will use half whole wheat flour in the pie crust instead of all white flour, because that adds fiber, which can make the body feel satisfied sooner.

"If you're

talking about how you're going to live for the rest of your life," she said, "have whatever you're thinking about. But be moderate. If you feel deprived, it's gonna be an obsession. You're gonna dream about it."

Experts agree it's perfectly fine — even healthy — to indulge during the holidays, just don't go bonkers. No matter what you do, don't starve yourself or skip meals because that only sets you up for grabbing the closest plate of brownies.

Gelsie Lessig, a registered dietician, suggests eating a substantial snack — such as a half sandwich — before going out to a special meal.

"Because if you go out and are so hungry, it's all downhill from there," said Lessig, also co-owner of Inlighten Health Seminars, a business catering to people who seek to lose at least 50 pounds.

When you're at a holiday party, scan the table of delectables to decide which three, high-calorie foods you really want. Devote half of your plate to waistline-friendly choices such as sliced fruits and vegetables, experts suggest.

And remember, all of those bites of food (broken Christmas cookies included) really do count. Another way to stave off weight gain is by exercising.

Experts suggest families weave walking or playing games into their holiday rituals. Not only will it burn calories, but it will also help take the focus off food. ■

**KEEP HOLIDAY
EATING
UNDER CONTROL**

- **Don't skip breakfast.** If you starve yourself, you're more likely to reach for the wrong things (and eat too much of them).

- **Balance it out.** If you are going to a party, eat small, healthy meals beforehand such as a low-fat sandwich for lunch.

- **Never go to a party hungry.** Take the edge off your hunger by eating a healthy snack such as apple slices, yogurt or vegetable soup.

- **Drink plenty of water.** And drink a glass before the party to help fill you up.

- **Bring your own guilt-free dish** to the party so you know there's at least one you can splurge on.

- **Use a small plate** so it looks full.

- **Remember, you can eat whatever you'd like,** as long as it's in moderation.

- **Don't drink your calories.** Consume alcohol in moderation, if at all.

- **If you want dessert, eat fewer calories during dinner** and eat only the desserts you really want. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY
WALTER
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COX NEWS
SERVICE**Some pork cuts fit your diet**

When dining out, dieters often scan the menu for chicken and fish to find dishes lower in fat and calories. They may even search out a lean cut of beef — such as top sirloin or strip steak — and order it sliced on top of a salad. But pork often gets overlooked as a lighter protein entree possibility.

It's true that nutrition facts reveal a full rack of baby back ribs slathered in barbecue sauce can add up to 1,000 calories, but there's more than one way to serve a pig. Many cuts of pork are actually as lean as skinless chicken.

The National Pork Board Web site is proud to report that "Through changes in feeding and breeding techniques, pork producers have responded to consumer demand for leaner pork. Today's pork has 16 percent less fat and 27 percent less saturated fat than 15 years ago."

Pork tenderloin is famously fit for weight control and meets U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for "extra lean" (less than 5 grams fat per 3-ounce serving). In fact, a 3-ounce portion of pork tenderloin contains less than 3 grams of total fat and only 120 calories.

Registered dietitian Ceci Snyder with the National Pork Board says, "The best way to find leaner cuts of pork is to look for the words 'loin' or 'chop' on the

menu. When you see a center cut pork chop, it's taken from the loin so will be a lean choice with 153 calories and about 6 grams of fat per 3-ounce serving." Of course, a 3-ounce serving isn't the usual size served in restaurants, but you can use that as a comparative guide.

Chefs at the two South City Kitchen locations in Atlanta consistently feature pork on their menus. At the Vinings location, chef Chip Ulbrich grills center cut pork chops and serves them with sauteed mustard greens, and tosses in another nod to the pig with tasso ham mac and cheese. Chef Dean Dupuis at the Midtown location braises pork shank in cider spiked with chile and serves it with stone-ground grits, green tomato chow chow and brussels sprouts accessorized with Benton's bacon. Snyder points out that "The pork shank, which is from the leg, is lean because it's a well-exercised part of the pig."

Another menu trend "is to pair leaner cuts of pork with the flavors of fattier cuts on the same plate," Snyder says.

Snyder says pork is best when cooked to medium doneness (an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit). "Because today's pork is so lean, it's important not to overcook it, so it's juicy and tender. Think slightly pink."

Dupuis says five years ago if he'd

serve pork with a little pink in the middle, his customers would send it back, but "It's not as bad as it once was when everyone freaked out." If worries about trichinosis still haunt you, know that it's nonexistent today. If it were present in pork, food safety experts say that cooking to 137 degrees Fahrenheit would kill it, and that temperature is well below what's recommended.

Pork is a good source of:

- **Thiamin.** This key vitamin supports the metabolism of carbohydrates, protein and fat. Pork contains 54 percent of the daily value needed for thiamin.

- **Niacin,** involved in the metabolism of sugars and fatty acids.

- **Riboflavin,** which has an important role in the release of energy from foods.

- **Vitamin B6,** which plays a critical role in the regulation of carbohydrate metabolism.

- **Phosphorus,** which strengthens bones and generates energy in cells.

And the meat is a good source of:

- **Zinc,** key in energy metabolism. ■

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Chef Dean Dupuis of South City Kitchen in Atlanta displays his cider and chile-braised pork shank. He serves it with such sides as stone-ground grits.