

All I Want for Christmas is ... to Gain 5 Pounds?

Will your weight change this holiday season? Most people believe they gain 5 pounds over the holiday season. That is a daily average of 400-450 excess calories consumed in just 6 weeks. Can that really be? A study in the March 2000 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine investigated weight gain that occurred over the holiday season to find the facts around holiday weight gain and how it contributed to weight changes over the whole year.

In this study, the holiday season included the 6 weeks between Thanksgiving and New Years. The study found that less than 10% of participants actually gained 5 pounds or more during the holiday season. Those participants who gained 5 or more pounds tended to be overweight or obese at the beginning of the holiday season. The average weight gain between Thanksgiving and New Years only totaled 0.8 pounds per person, but the weight was not lost after the holiday season.

At the end of the year, the average participant gained a total of 1.4 pounds. A weight gain of 1.4 pounds may not seem like a lot, but after 5 years that is a total weight gain of 7 pounds, after 10 years it equals 14 pounds. The 6-week holiday season contributed a little over half of this total yearly weight gain. Participants who were better able to control their weight during the holiday season had fewer complaints of hunger and maintained regular physical activity.

Realizing that weight gain is difficult to manage, Mammoth Hospital will be offering a new session of their weight management program beginning January 29th. This 12-week program will focus on healthy eating and physical activity habits to control the yearly weight gain. In 2006, 86% of participants of the Mammoth Hospital weight management program lost weight and 67% reduced their cardiac risk factors. Sign-up quick! The deadline to enroll is January 5th or once 15 participants are enrolled. Members of the 12-week program are eligible for a 50 % discount on Mammoth Hospital's weight management services. Call (760) 934-7302 for more information.