

### *Eating Around the Clock ...for portion control*

**Whether you're at a holiday gathering, or out enjoying a local restaurant's buffet offerings, the challenge is to keep portions under control.**

Since buffet items come without food labels, you have to make selections based on how the foods look. Spend a minute or two to scope out your selections, keeping *MyPyramid* in mind. Then, start by selecting the smallest plate size available, since by filling a smaller plate, you're more likely to keep portions under control. *Then, look at the feast in front of you:*

- **Divide the salad choices into cream-based and plain.** Cream-based usually means more calories, fat and cholesterol, so go easy on those, and go more for the plain salads and relish tray veggies. If a dip or dressing is offered, take small portions 'on the side' and use sparingly.
- **Look for healthier grain products.** This is tricky- again because there are no food labels to tell you how many grams of fiber the crackers or breads contain. Also keep in mind that even if a bread or cracker is dark in color doesn't necessarily mean it's a healthier, high fiber choice. Since it is so hard to choose a high fiber grain product, you may want to stick with the lower fat choices, such as pita bread, pretzels and wheat thins. Watch what goes ON the crackers, too. Salsas or other vegetable-based toppings are usually good selections.
- **A handful of nuts**, although not low in calories would give you a great source of protein, fiber, and heart-healthy fats. Try walnuts, almonds, pecans or peanuts- and keep it to a handful.
- **Don't forget your fruit and veggies!** Most of us don't meet the goal of at least five fruits and vegetables every day, so here's your chance to load up. Try to vary the colors, too: reds, orange/yellow, greens, whites and blue/purple. The more brilliant the color, the more cancer-fighting phytochemicals you'll receive.

#### ***Take Home Message:***

- ***Here's an idea to use with participants...*** As mentioned earlier, grab the smallest plate size available. Look at the plate as though it had a clock face on it. From the noon to 6 o'clock position, fill it as high as you want with plain fruits and vegetables. At the 6-7 o'clock position, fill it with a dip or salsa of your choice. From the 7-8 o'clock position, give yourself a layer of nuts. From 8-10 o'clock, some pretzels, pita bread or crackers. From 10-midnight, a sweet treat. Then, "eat around the clock", starting at noon-6, and ending up at 'midnight'. Chances are, if you start by loading up on the high fiber fruits and veggies, and work 'clock-wise', by the time you get to 'midnight', that one cookie will stay at that- just one!

**For NEA background information only. Do not copy for participants.**

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Date: January 7, 2009

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**EXTENSION**