



>> VACATION SMART

Deirdre Gamill Hock from Fitwell Lifestyles gives us some helpful vacay tips!

You have worked hard to lose fat or maintain your weight and get fit. Now it is vacation time. But how do you have fun on vacation without straying from your commitment to a healthy lifestyle?

For many people, a vacation is an excuse to over-indulge and some may even try to lose weight before the vacation so they can overeat and drink more than usual while away. Or they may decide on an "acceptable" amount of weight gain during their trip.

Limiting your vacation plans to what or how much you are going to eat and drink is narrowing the potential of what could be a memorable trip. Of course you don't want to be on a restrictive and controlling diet when on vacation. It's time to get away and relax!

An option is to think "healthy lifestyle". Forget the attitude that weight gain is probable or unavoidable and keep in the fun by planning activities and exercise along with healthier food and drink choices. You might even lose weight!

Studies show that fitness can decline as fast as 10% in one week of complete bed rest. Can that be much different from a week of lounging on the beach?

Here are some ideas to help you have a successful no-diet, no-weight gain vacation.

Food should not be the focus of your vacation.

You can overeat anytime but what can you do on vacation that you can't do at home? Read a book? Enjoy your family? Explore the area through biking, hiking or canoeing? Play cards and games? Sleep late?

Avoid All-You-Can-Eat Temptations

Many all-inclusive vacations resorts and cruises make it easy to over-indulge by offering buffets for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Avoid the all-you-can-eat temptations by checking if a la carte dining is an option. If it is not, follow the "OPR" (one plate rule), and don't go back for seconds.

Go For a Starter

Start your meal with a filling, lower calorie food such as vegetable based soups or salads with a vinaigrette dressing. Then indulge in smaller portions of the high calorie foods.

Schedule unrushed meal times into your day.

Skipping meals or getting too hungry can result in overeating and binges. Meals eaten in a hurry can be the highest in calories and least satisfying.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask Questions

Ask the people at the front desk of your hotel about local restaurants and what types of food they serve. Read menus and pick items that are described as baked, broiled, grilled poached, roasted, steamed or stir-fried. If you decide to enjoy a high fat entrée, choose low fat food the rest of your meals that day. Decrease portion size by splitting an entree, getting a child's portion, or, if possible, saving half of your meal for later.

Don't eat all of your meals in restaurants.

Make your first stop the grocery store and stock up on whole grain bread, peanut butter, fruit, pretzels, low fat popcorn, cereal, calorie free drinks, raw vegetables, crackers and granola bars. If your room has a refrigerator, you can also have yogurt, skim milk, low fat lunch meat, and precooked rotisserie chicken.

VACATION HEALTH PLAN

Think about your trip, what you really want from it and how to make it healthier...

- What is the overall goal of the trip?
- Where do I plan to go?
- Who are my traveling companions?
- Will I eat all my meals at a restaurant or can I prepare some of them in my room?
- What healthy foods should I have on hand for quick meals or snacks?
- Which restaurants offer healthy selections?
- How will I get most of my exercise?
- What equipment will I need?
- What high-risk situations may occur?
- What activities besides eating and drinking can I do for fun?

Limit alcohol to two drinks per day.

All alcoholic drinks contain empty calories and frozen drinks are some of the worst offenders. A daiquiri can have 500 calories or more.

De-emphasize food and focus on activities. Participate in exercise classes, exercise before lounging, walk everywhere, and look for opportunities to move.

Think Ahead

Plan to stay in hotels that have facilities for exercising or walking trails. Pack a jump rope and exercise bands just in case. Your room is a great place to do stretching, lunges, squats, crunches, push-ups and jumping jacks.

Plan an active vacation.

How about one that includes bicycling, hiking, skiing, canoeing, swimming, walking tours, kayaking, snorkeling or horseback riding? Feeling adventurous? How about rock climbing, parachuting or scuba diving? The possibilities are endless. Don't forget to pack your walking shoes and any other clothes or equipment that you will need to stay active.