

Party hearty and healthy

- Don't skip a meal thinking it will offset what you eat at the party. If you're hungry, you'll likely eat more of that high-calorie party food than you would if you fill your stomach with something healthy at home.

- At the party, load up your plate with veggies. (But take it easy on the dip.)

- Head for the table with the non-alcoholic drinks. Alcohol can stimulate your appetite and contains a lot of empty calories. Try alternating a sip of wine with a sip of water.

- If the party is at your house, send leftovers home with your guests.

- Finger foods are dangerous because they're easy to pop into your mouth without thinking. Don't hang around the buffet table to graze. Fill your plate with small portions and step away.

- Try baked wings instead of fried. And if you can't enjoy your wings without blue cheese or ranch dressing, use the low-fat kind.

- Wear clothes that fit, and pay attention if the waist starts to feel too tight. (No fair cheating with elastic waist pants!)

- If you're the kind of person who must end your meal on a sweet note, save the fruit plate for last.

Sources: www.webmd.com; Eric Plasker, author of "The 100 Year Lifestyle"; Susan Burke March, author of "Making Weight Control Second Nature"

