Getting back on track....It can be done.

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If you're like me the holidays are a continuous battle. From Thanksgiving to New Years Day we are being tempted with unhealthy foods. Candy, pie, cake, cookies, bread, gravy, potatoes, stuffing....I could go on and on. These are foods I normally wouldn't touch because I know that they will trigger my cravings. Cravings are caused by the simple carbohydrates found in those foods. Simple carbohydrates are the quickest source of energy, but are very rapidly digested and won't satisfy your appetite for very long.

My solution to the holiday binge is to begin eating totally "clean" once the holidays are over. I increase my good fats and up my protein intake. I continue my normal exercise routine, drink plenty of water to be sure I am staying hydrated throughout the day, and cut out all simple carbs. Whereas simple carbs are bad for you because they induce cravings, complex carbs are very important to a balanced diet. Complex carbohydrates are rich in fiber, thus satisfying and healthy. Complex carbs are usually found in whole plant foods that are high in vitamins and minerals. I eat plenty of vegetables, including sweet potatoes, and eliminate all simple carbs from my diet. Within three or four days of eating "clean", the cravings are gone. If I do slip and eat those "craving-producing foods, here's a tip that works for me and you might want to try; I distract myself until they are gone by keeping busy. I clean my garage, go to the gym, take a walk or fold some laundry, and by the time I am done I no longer have that craving. You need to be sure and do something that will keep your mind active. Sitting on the sofa and watching television or reading a book doesn't work for me. Another way to curb cravings is to have a healthy snack like carrots, celery, cucumbers or other raw veggies. These will fill you up so you don't feel hungry anymore which, in turn, will lessen the odds of going for the "junk" foods.

So as difficult as the holiday season is, I have learned how to get through it the best I can and then make sure I start eating properly to get back on track once the holidays are over. That is what works for me. The holidays are difficult to deal with, but if you stay positive and get back to the program in the new year, you'll be right back on track. Don't give up. It CAN be done! I'd be interested in knowing how you handle the temptations of eating around the holidays and how you get back on track. Please share your experiences.

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