

Clear Reflections Psychotherapy, PLLC

Traci Breniser Wilson, MA LLP

How to Have a Healthy Holiday

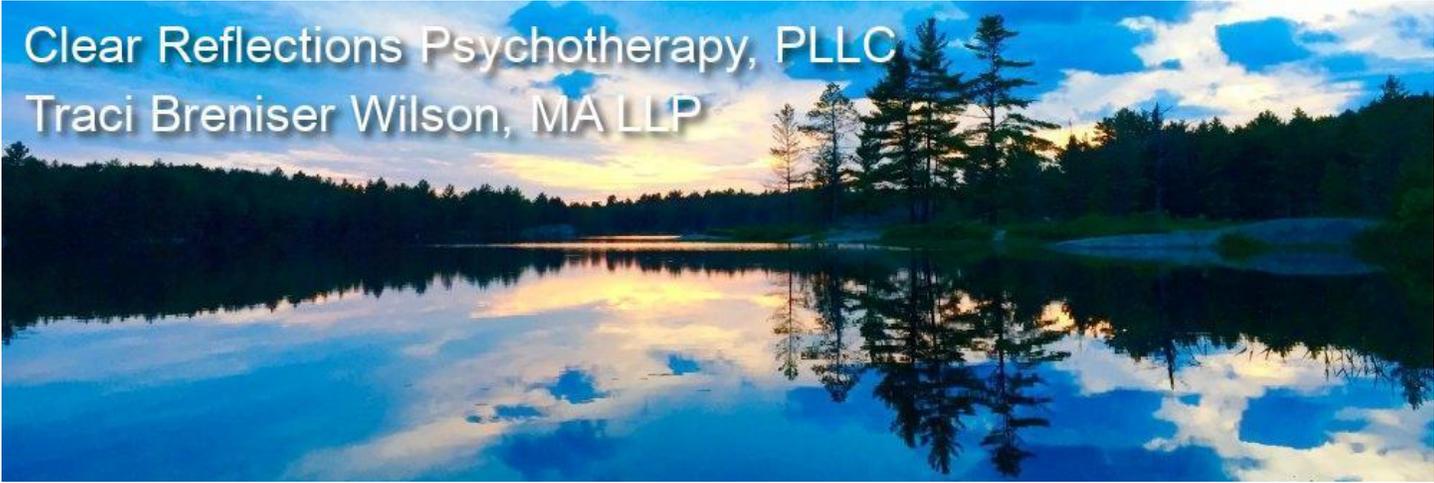
While the holiday season may seem like a great time to splurge, instead think of it as an excellent time to take your first step toward good health. Even though this can be a hectic time, there are steps you can take that will make it easier for you to tackle your goals for better health in the New Year.

Here are a few helpful hints to get you through the holidays:

1. No matter how busy you get, make time for a healthy breakfast—it will control cravings later on.
2. Throughout the day, listen to your body and eat when you are truly hungry. Don't skip meals because you are going to a party later that night.
3. Just because it's the holidays, don't tell yourself it's OK to over eat. Instead, savor your favorite holiday treats and listen to when your body signals that it is no longer hungry.
4. At appetizer parties, instead of grazing all night, choose two or three of your favorites, put them on a small plate, sit down and enjoy.
5. Saying "no" to your favorite foods will only leave you feeling deprived and craving those foods more. Instead of completely avoiding favorite dishes, limit your portion size and savor every bite and stop eating when satiated.
6. Don't fall victim to "all or nothing" thinking. When you feel guilty for overeating, forgive yourself immediately and start fresh right at that moment instead of having an excuse to continue the binge till the next day or week. Remember: One meal is one meal. One day is one day.
7. Sometimes we confuse hunger with thirst so drink plenty of water. It will also prevent dehydration from the salty, rich foods and alcohol.
8. Be mindful of those little tastes when you are cooking and baking. It is better to save those bites for meal time when you can sit and savor your hard work.
9. Don't forget to play and have fun: go for a walk or play football with the family. You are less likely to emotionally eat if you are busy and enjoying life.
10. Stock your kitchen with quick, easy meals to prevent last-minute fast food runs.
11. Despite being extra busy, listen to when your body wants to move and make time to exercise. Don't forget to stretch and move—even if you only have 10 minutes.
12. Add health-related gifts to your wish list this year which contribute to physical, mental and spiritual growth — they could help make for a happier and healthier 2010!

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Traci Breniser Wilson is a clinical psychologist with offices in Brooklyn, MI. She has 30+ years of experience and specializes in eating disorders, weight loss, depression, anxiety, marriage repair and enrichment, addiction, grief and loss, Christian therapy, and goal achievement. For more information on How to Have a Healthy Holiday or other mental health questions, feel free to contact Traci.

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