

Alas, the holiday season is upon us, along with more temptations than we usually have to face. Now is the time to prepare yourself and arm yourself with nutritional information so you know exactly how to handle the temptations. Make a list of the foods you expect to have access to the next couple of months. Research the nutritional information along with



the calorie count, carbohydrate and fat content, and then really LOOK at the information and decide how much if any you really want to consume realizing that if you do not increase your activity level, you will gain weight if you choose too many high calorie foods. Create some visual examples of portion sizes so you know how much to spoon onto your plate. Fill up your plate first with the items that you have already

determined are healthy, then you can add some of the less healthy choices, but just enough to you satisfy those cravings. I believe if we go into 'battle' knowing what we are up against, we will WIN! Another option you have is to take a dish to a gathering that you have prepared in a healthier way. When everyone compliments your dish, you can announce that it was prepared with healthy substitutions or just let them appreciate the great taste. They would be amazed that there are only X calories per serving.

As you are planning for holiday gatherings, what exactly do you have to do to prepare? If you are having guests into your home – you probably are planning on cleaning the house, polishing the silver, dusting off the china, planning your menus and creating a welcoming atmosphere for family and friends. If you are going to be traveling to



someone else's home – you probably are thinking about what clothing will need to be packed, what presents need to be purchased and wrapped, and how you can bring items to help the hostess/host prepare for their guests.

The Choice is Mine has excellent strategies for handling snacking, restaurants, fast-food restaurants, dinner parties, special events, and traveling on pages 42-45. Discussing these at a meeting would be a great program to provide your members with information that they can use during the holiday season.

This leads me to the next question – What is your chapter doing to get ready for your 'guests'? Who are your guests?

- People who come to your meeting place looking for a solution to their weight challenges.
- Former members who come back to see if anything has changed and they can get the support they need.
- Members who come every week, but think that no one there really sees them or understands them, which makes them feel like 'guests' instead of a member.

It is important for ALL your guests that the chapter members are welcoming them into the meeting. It is important that each feels that someone else cares about their struggles. It is also important that chapters take a look at themselves to figure out what needs to happen to make everyone feel a part of the chapter and for the chapter to offer something tangible for everyone.



Every new member should be receiving a 'My Day One' at the time they join. This is the first tool you can give them to get them started on their weight loss journey. Many chapters put together a 'New Member Packet' that they keep ready to hand out. If your chapter does not have these, now is the perfect time to put some together so that you are ready for 2012. TO be posted on the topswonders.com/Texas website, will be a word document that you can 'fill in the blanks' and print out. When it posts, I will send an email blast with instructions. You can save to your computer and then update as officers change or add things that are applicable to your chapter.



I have had several requests from Leaders and members asking for help in getting their chapter on track. If your chapter has not retained any new members this past year, if your attendance seems to be low, if some members aren't in the 'weight control' mood, now would be a great time for your chapter to do a self-evaluation to determine what the members need. We are in the process of posting the 'Chapter Rescue and Rejuvenation Kit' found at topswonders.com/Texas. There are step by step instructions on how to maximize the chapter's effect on the members and improve what your chapter offers to new members. Again, I will send an email blast to all members on how to access when I know it has been posted.

On the website is this month's condensed Leadership Skills Lesson #4. I hope that you are taking advantage of this tool to improve all of our member's leadership skills and accessing the complete lesson on topswonders.com/Texas.



Starting with this newsletter, I will only be mailing copies to chapters where no officer has email. It is up to those with email addresses to share the newsletter with their fellow members. The newsletter with graphics is posted on the topswonders.com/Texas under NEWLETTERS, under Cindy Moore's AREA, under Cindy Moore. Your Area Captain's newsletters are also posted under their name. Also posted monthly are newsletters from our Regional Director Bev Staniak. We all have different thoughts to share with you the members, and hope that you get what you need through our communications. I will be mailing any chapter specific information as needed, such as your current membership list in December to help your Weight Recorders with your year-end resume.

**As always, if you have any questions or concerns please call or email me. I am here to help.
Hope you each have a safe and stress-free holiday season.**



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