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Battling Diets Through the Holiday Season

Holiday weight gain is a battle for one-in-four Americans

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The holiday season is upon us, and for the average American that means yummy treats and bountiful feasts, but for all of the dieters out there, this may be a time of mixed emotions. In a recent study conducted by Directive Analytics just prior to the holiday season, 92% of Americans surveyed indicate they plan to celebrate Christmas this year, while 10% plan to celebrate Chanukah and 2% plan to celebrate Kwanzaa. A small minority (4%) will not be celebrating Christmas, Chanukah or Kwanzaa this year.

Since so many holiday gatherings take place around the dinner table, everyone has a favorite holiday meal or treat they look forward to. Turkey is the food respondents look forward to most overall (17%). Other favorites include ham (14%), cookies (8%) and stuffing (6%). However, men and women's taste buds sometimes differ around the holidays—men are more likely to crave meat while women have more of a sweet tooth. Turkey and ham are favored more by men (20% vs. 13% and 16% vs. 12% respectively), while women are more likely to look forward to cookies during the holidays (10% vs. 5%).

Holiday weight gain is not something that anyone wants to experience, but sometimes it is inevitable. More than one-in-four Americans (27%) anticipate a weight gain during the holiday season. Seven pounds is the average that respondents anticipate gaining, while 6% plan to fully indulge and expect to pack on an extra 10 pounds. Men are more likely than women to anticipate a weight gain of more than 10 pounds (9% vs. 3%).

Over one-in-three of Americans (35%) are not going to let holiday parties and calorie counting stand in their way—they plan to eat anything and everything they want. Men are more likely than women to exhibit this behavior (40% vs. 30%). Others are taking small steps to monitor their eating by taking smaller portions (46%), putting a limit on the number of desserts they have (38%), or choosing healthier offerings (34%).

About half of Americans say they are currently trying to lose weight (52%) and a majority of these respondents, plan to continue their diet throughout the holiday season (73%).

Dieters are much more inclined than non-dieters to monitor their eating during the holiday season; however, with all of their attempts to stay on the diet wagon throughout

the year, the holidays appear to be the perfect chance to cheat. Only 1% plan to go as far as making a separate holiday meal that follows their diet plan, and 13% are throwing in the towel by diving headfirst into the holidays and eating anything and everything they want.

Survey Methodology

An online questionnaire of approximately 15 minutes in length was fielded using a random national sample of Directive Analytics online panel members. The surveys were conducted between November 16-25, 2007. A total of 1,007 interviews were completed among adults 18 years and older.

About Directive Analytics

Directive Analytics is a full service Marketing Research company, located in Norwalk, CT. At Directive Analytics, we provide our clients with the consumer insight and strategic action plans necessary to set themselves apart and grow their business. We offer a blend of the methodological expertise and rigor of a traditional research company, along with the consultative approach of a marketing consultancy. Our people are the key to our success. Our collective experiences and education serve as the basis for developing new insights and partnering with our clients to generate the strategic action plans that will differentiate and add value to their business. For more information, please visit our website at www.directiveanalytics.com or email us at info@directiveanalytics.com.