

Holiday Weight Change in a Commercial Weight Loss Program

Weight gain during the “holiday season,” (i.e., from Thanksgiving to New Year’s Day) is well documented. Overweight/obese persons in the general population are at greatest risk for weight gain during this period, but weight change results among those actively trying to lose weight during the holiday season have not been published. In the present study, we examined weight change during the holiday season among persons enrolled in a commercial weight loss program that includes home delivery of portion-controlled entrees and snacks that are supplemented with fresh grocery items (i.e., Nutrisystem®). In the years 2006-2009, active Nutrisystem customers who used the company’s web tool to track their weight in the week before Thanksgiving and in the week following New Year’s Day were selected. The sample included 10,215 participants (74% female) with a mean age of $46.3 \pm$ (standard deviation) 11.7 years, weight of 91.6 ± 21.6 kg, and body mass index of 32.2 ± 6.6 kg/m² at the start of the observation period. Reported weight change was -2.5 ± 3.2 kg during the holiday season (mean duration = 44.9 days), equivalent to a $-2.7 \pm 3.3\%$ change in initial weight (median = 2.9%). Average weight changes reported during periods of equal length, but beginning 9, 6, and 3 months before Thanksgiving were $-4.5 \pm 2.8\%$, $-4.1 \pm 2.8\%$, and $-4.4 \pm 2.8\%$ of initial weight, respectively. These findings suggest that meaningful weight loss is not only possible, but also common, among persons attempting to lose weight during the holiday season.

Reference

Daggy BP, Fabricatore AN, Xiang Y. Holiday weight change in a commercial weight loss program. (Presented at Advances and Controversies in Clinical Nutrition, a meeting of the American Society for Nutrition. San Francisco, CA. February 26, 2011.)