Eating healthy at summer gatherings

Eating and socializing go hand in hand. Throughout human history, people have gathered together to eat. Some research has shown that when people are in a group, they tend to eat larger meals and more calories. As a result, it can be hard to stick with your healthy eating plans when you're at a social event such as a summer barbecue or special occasion.

To help you stay on track, try these tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

- *Drink plenty of water.* Your body needs water for nearly all of its functions. And if you're dehydrated, the hunger and thirst cues can get confused. Drink water at gatherings, especially before your meals. You may end up feeling fuller and eating less.

- *Bring your own food.* If you know you'll have a hard time passing up the high-calorie treats, bring your own healthy dish to pass. Summer is the optimal time to share delicious, fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season.

- *Don't deprive yourself.* You can still have a small portion of your favorite summer treat. Just fill up on the healthier options first. This will satisfy most of your hunger and can help you control your portion sizes. Choose low-calorie, high-fiber foods like fruits, vegetables and beans before you go for the fried foods or desserts.