

Party without putting on weight

IT'S too easy to leave good intentions towards your diet at home during the festive season, says Amanda Clark, author of "Portion Perfection".

"It happens to the best of us – we arrive at a function or party, head straight for the chips or canapes and scoff the lot while we're busy chatting," she says.

Remember, you won't put on too much weight if you overindulge once in a while, but if you eat everything in sight at every function you will, she says.

Alcohol doesn't help either, she cautions – it lowers your inhibitions so you don't care about calories, and is high-calorie in itself.

"Alcohol will be in abundance, so limit yourself to two or three drinks," she says.

Steer clear of creamy cocktails and opt for wine or spirits with a low-calorie mixer, advises Amanda. "One glass of wine, a stubbie of light beer and one nip of spirits are all equivalent to 100 calories," she says.

"Always finish your glass before you allow it to be refilled. If you're constantly being topped up it will be hard to keep track of how many drinks, and calories, you've had.

"Or stand with soda water in a champagne glass – it feels special, doesn't go down fast like a soft drink, keeps you sober and saves on calories, so it's an all-round winner."

Amanda also suggests that you eat something healthy before you go. "A low-fat snack like a banana will help stop you from over-indulging later," she says.

And don't forget to avoid the hangover! "Don't drink on an empty stomach and alternate each alcoholic drink with water," says Amanda.

"Drink loads of water before you go to bed and take a B vitamin to help metabolise the alcohol. If you do wake up with a hangover, it's best to keep to small serves of low-fat foods like toasted bread, and keep drinking water."