

December Health Tips

Christmas Bucket List

- Buy a present.....**BE** present
- Wrap a gift..... Wrap **SOMEONE IN A HUG**
- Send gifts..... Send **LOVE**
- Shop for food.....**DONATE** food
- Make cookies.....Make **MEMORIES**
- See the lights.....**BE** the light

5 Quick easy health tips for the week:

- Pack a handful of almonds for an afternoon snack to combat heart disease, and add protein, fiber, calcium and iron to your diet.
- Instead of pasta or potatoes, eat a chicken breast. Subbing protein leads to slimmer middles and can lead to lower blood pressure.
- Listen or sing a favorite song. Music can provide drug-free help for stress and aches and pains.
- Floss your teeth tonight. Flossing four to six times a week can add about three years to your life.
- When you go to bed, try slow, deep breathing, counting to 10 as you inhale and again as you exhale. Ten to fifteen minutes of this breathing daily can restore balance to your nervous system and can also help you sleep better.

Healthy Eating during the Holiday Season

- Appetizers—Raw vegetables make for a colorful platter that offers crunch as well as good nutrition. For a low fat dip, try using salsa or substitute plain yogurt for sour cream in dips.
- Beverages—Make sure you have low calorie beverages and seltzers on hand, as well as juices. Some guests may enjoy non alcoholic beer or wine as well.
- Main Dishes—Compared to frying, it is far healthier to bake, roast, or broil foods, keeping oil or butter to a minimum. Be sure to offer salads and vegetables, with dressings or sauces served on the side. By offering gravy, sauces, and dressings on the side, you let your guests decide how much or little they want on their food.
- Desserts—Fresh fruits and sorbets make healthy alternatives to cake or pies. If you do your baking from scratch, try cutting back on the amount of sugar and oils in the recipe. Apple sauce can often be substituted for some or all of the oil. Or you can substitute ingredients with less fat; for example use two egg whites instead of one whole egg.

Holiday gifts for YOU

- Make connections-Good relationships with family and friends are important.
- Set realistic goals-Take small steps.
- Keep things in perspective-Try to consider stressful situations in a broader context and keep a long term perspective.
- Take stretch breaks-Stretching promotes relaxation and reduces stress.
- Take a walk-A brisk, crisp walk in the cold air will energize you in minutes.
- Relax-You can counteract your body's reaction to stress by using relaxation techniques such as some soothing music, deep breathing, or yoga.
- Eat and sleep well—Good nutrition and adequate sleep play a large role in your ability to heal and fight off infection.
- Don't drink or eat too much—simple words, difficult to follow during the holiday season.
- Exercise-sustained exercise releases norepinephrine, serotonin, dopamine and beta-endorphins in our bloodstream. These naturally occurring chemicals have been proven to provide a sense of euphoria or wellbeing, are natural pain blockers and antidepressants which increase energy and lift your mood.

Holiday Food Preparation

Plan Ahead

- Keep food safety in mind as you plan your potluck dish.
- If you or your family members are sick with gastroenteritis (a stomach “bug” or stomach “flu”), do not prepare foods for others.
- Prepare foods that are easy to serve with utensils.
- When possible, bring items that do not require temperature control, such as whole fresh fruits, nuts, dried fruits, and certain types of baked goods.
- If you bring hot or cold foods, make sure that you have a way to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

Preparation

- Properly wash your hands before preparing foods.
- Whenever you want to taste food, use the *Two Spoon Tasting Method*. Take a food sample from a container with a clean spoon or utensil, and put it into another spoon for tasting.
- Minimize the handling of foods with bare hands. Instead, use utensils, especially when mixing cold salads that contain cooked ingredients, such as potato, ham, chicken, or pasta salads.
- For cold mixed dishes, allow ingredients to cool before mixing them together.
- After they are mixed, cold salads must be kept cool (at 40°F or lower) at all times.

Transporting

- Keep cold food (such as cold salads with ingredients such as ham, chicken, tuna, and potatoes) at 40°F or below. Use a cooler with ice or gel packs.
- Keep hot foods (such as stews and chili) at 140°F or above. Use an insulated container, such as a crock pot wrapped in paper bags, during travel.
- Wrap casserole dishes with aluminum foil. Pack just before leaving home and open the container right before serving.
- Do not transport food and animals in the same vehicle.

Serving

- Assign one person to be in charge of checking the food to ensure it is safe to eat.
- Keep surfaces clean and use clean dishes and utensils to serve.
- Provide plenty of utensils for each item so that people can avoid touching the food.

Reheating Leftovers

- Reheat leftovers to 165°F.
- Serve food onto clean, small plates and do not refill them; use new clean plates.
- Use long-handled utensils so that handles do not fall into the food.
- Separate raw foods from cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Keep *hot foods* at 140°F or warmer. Use slow cookers and warming trays.
- Keep *cold foods* at 40°F or colder. Place dishes in bowls of ice, or use small serving trays and replace them often.
- Wash plates and utensils with hot, soapy water to minimize the risk of cross contamination.
- Teach children and young family members good hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before taking food from the