



# IN GOOD HEALTH NEWSLETTER...December



*Valerie Smith, MS, ACM JIF Wellness Director*

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## December: Healthy Holiday Eating & Drinking Stress & Depression & the Holidays



### Healthy Holiday Eating

Did you know ?

Part of a realistic, long - term approach to healthy eating is to realize that your eating will not be the same everyday. This is especially true on holidays and special occasions

#### **Avoid Extremes**

Expect to eat more than usual at social events and plan accordingly, rather than beating yourself up afterwards. In addition, avoid the other extreme of "going off my diet" and abandoning any efforts at healthy eating. Parties do not have to be associated with overeating and feeling stuffed. You will feel better afterwards if you take the middle ground and avoid the extremes of severe restriction or mindless overeating.

#### **Don't Come With an Appetite**

Depriving yourself all day so you can enjoy the party will lead you to eat anything in reach, rather than what you truly enjoy. Also, when you are hungry you will tend to eat more quickly, which will lead you to feel too full and uncomfortable.

#### **What's The Occasion?**

Whether it is a holiday, special celebration, or vacation remember why you are there. Food is part of the celebration, but it does not have to be the main focus. Enjoy spending time with family and friends. Depending on the type of party or occasion, you can bring a board game, craft, or an outdoor game that gets family and friends moving. Make the social experience your focus

#### **Use a Small Plate**

Rather than fill up a large plate, use a smaller (salad) plate for your meal.

#### **Be Picky**

Do not waste your calories on just any food. Stick to the ones that you really like, especially those only available at certain times of the year.

#### **Keep Your Distance From Appetizers and the Buffet Table**

When at a buffet, select the food you want to eat and move far away from the buffet table. The further away you are from the source, the less likely you will be to make the effort for multiple helpings.



## Holiday Drinking

### Easy Does it.

Alcohol not only contains calories, it lowers your inhibitions about many things, including eating.

So, if you drink, limit the number of drinks you have to decrease excess calories and alcohol's effect on your eating



Did you know? Nationwide, nearly one in 13 people has a drinking problem. Millions more engage in risky drinking behaviors that jeopardize their health, relationships, productivity, and general being

### 11 Ways to Curb Your Drinking

- 1 Put it in writing.** Making a list of the reasons to curtail your drinking — such as feeling healthier, sleeping better, or improving your relationships — can motivate you.
- 2 Set a drinking goal.** Set a limit on how much you will drink. You should keep your drinking below the recommended guidelines: no more than one standard drink per day for women and for men ages 65 and older, and no more than two standard drinks per day for men under 65. These limits may be too high for people who have certain medical conditions or for some older adults. Your doctor can help you determine what's right for you.
- 3 Keep a diary of your drinking.** For three to four weeks, keep track of every time you have a drink. Include information about what and how much you drank as well as where you were. Compare this to your goal. If you're having trouble sticking to your goal, discuss it with your doctor or another health professional.
- 4 Don't keep alcohol in your house.** Having no alcohol at home can help limit your drinking.
- 5 Drink slowly.** Sip your drink. Drink soda, water, or juice after having an alcoholic beverage. Never drink on an empty stomach.
- 6 Choose alcohol-free days.** Decide not to drink a day or two each week. You may want to abstain for a week or a month to see how you feel physically and emotionally without alcohol in your life. Taking a break from alcohol can be a good way to start drinking less.
- 7 Watch for peer pressure.** Practice ways to say no politely. You do not have to drink just because others are, and you shouldn't feel obligated to accept every drink you're offered. Stay away from people who encourage you to drink.
- 8 Keep busy.** Take a walk, play sports, go out to eat, or catch a movie. When you're at home, pick up a new hobby or revisit an old one. Painting, board games, playing a musical instrument, woodworking — these and other activities are great alternatives to drinking.
- 9 Ask for support.** Cutting down on your drinking may not always be easy. Let friends and family members know that you need their support. Your doctor, counselor, or therapist may also be able to offer help.
- 10 Guard against temptation.** Steer clear of people and places that make you want to drink. If you associate drinking with certain events, such as holidays or vacations, develop a plan for managing them in advance. Monitor your feelings. When you're worried, lonely, or angry, you may be tempted to reach for a drink. Try to cultivate new, healthy ways to cope with stress.
- 11 Be persistent.** Most people who successfully cut down or stop drinking altogether do so only after several attempts. You'll probably have setbacks, but don't let them keep you from reaching your long-term goal. There's really no final endpoint, as the process usually requires ongoing effort. Some of these strategies — such as watching for peer pressure, keeping busy, asking for support, being aware of temptation, and being persistent — can also be helpful for people who want to give up alcohol completely.



## Stress & Depression & the Holidays



The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few.

But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

- 1. Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
- 2. Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.
- 3. Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.
- 4. Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.
- 5. Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.  
**Try these alternatives:**
  - Donate to a charity in someone's name.
  - Give homemade gifts.
  - Start a family gift exchange.
- 6. Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling sad or anxious, unable to sleep, hopeless and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to a doctor or mental health professional.
- 7. Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.
- 8. Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost **time**.
- 9. Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.  
Try these suggestions:
  - Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
  - Get plenty of sleep.
  - Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.
- 10. Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Some options may include:
  - Taking a walk at night and stargazing.
  - Listening to soothing music.
  - Getting a massage, read a book

[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)

# Your Holiday Party Plan



**Review this questionnaire prior to attending your holiday event.**

- 1. Describe the special occasion.**
- 2. What activities and traditions at this event are the most meaningful and enjoyable to you? What pleasurable activities other than food and drink, can you focus on during this event?**
- 3. What are the positive outcomes of being health conscious during this event?**
- 4. What strategies will you use to eat healthy at the event? For example, making a plan with family members, planning what foods you will eat, increasing your physical activity, focusing on socializing, bringing healthy food etc.**
- 5. Take time to think about potential problems in advance. What problems might come up?**
- 6. List some possible solutions to the problems. choose the best solution. What will you need to do to make this happen?**
- 7. After the event is over, assess the plan. How did it work?**

# Winter Fruit Salad



## Ingredients

1/2 cup sugar  
1 1 -inch piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced  
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped out  
1 lemon  
5 large navel or blood oranges  
2 mangoes, peeled and diced  
2 firm bananas, peeled and diced  
5 kiwis, peeled and diced  
12 kumquats, very thinly sliced crosswise, seeds removed  
1 cup pomegranate seeds (from 1 pomegranate)

## Directions

Combine the sugar, 2 cups water, the ginger and vanilla seeds and pod in a saucepan. Use a vegetable peeler to remove wide strips of zest from the lemon and 1 orange, add to the saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer 5 minutes. Refrigerate until cold.

Meanwhile, peel the remaining oranges with a paring knife, cutting along the natural curve of the fruit. Hold an orange over a large bowl and cut along both sides of each membrane to free the segments, letting them fall into the bowl. Squeeze each empty membrane to release the juices. Repeat with the remaining oranges. Add the mangoes, bananas, kiwis, kumquats and pomegranate seeds and gently toss. Pour the syrup over the fruit and chill overnight.

Before serving, remove the citrus zest, ginger and vanilla pod. Spoon the fruit and syrup into bowls.

Total Time:

30 min

Prep:

30 min

Yield:6 servings

[www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com)