

DECEMBER 2011

Healthy Holiday Eating

This season, give the gift of tasty yet healthy holiday fare. Simple steps can cut the fat or sugar in your favourite dishes — all without sacrificing taste:

Reduce the Roast

Lean cuts of meat (loin), turkey (white meat) and fish are great choices. Trim visible fat before broiling, baking or stewing. Drain fat from meats after cooking. Baste with low fat broth, not drippings.

Slim the Trimmings

Cook stuffing separately and replace half the meat with chopped apple, dried cranberries, roasted chestnuts, lightly sautéed vegetables or rice. Use turkey sausage and omit butter (add broth if too dry). Skim the fat from drippings before making gravy.

Pour Divine Drinks

Mix sparkling drinks by adding seltzer or sugar-free soft drinks to juice. Serve low fat eggnog, flavoured seltzer with fruit kebobs or light/non-alcoholic wines or beers.

Lighten Up Side Dishes

Instead of heavy sauces, use low fat salad dressings, spices or herbs. Use buttery sauces sparingly, and amplify the flavour



with lemon juice and zest. Steam vegetables to preserve flavour and nutrients. Sweeten baked yams with apple or orange juice. Use low fat sour cream or buttermilk to prepare mashed potatoes. To prevent latkes from absorbing too much oil, cook potatoes beforehand, make the patties thin and fry quickly — or bake them.

Slenderize the Sweets

Create crust-free or single-crust pies and use fat-free evaporated milk in fillings. When baking, replace half the eggs with egg whites. Many recipes can be made with three-fourths the amount of sugar and up to half of the fat (replace with low fat dairy products or fruit puree). Use powdered sugar instead of frosting. Serve a sliver of angel cake with berries or fruit salad.

HEALTH NOTES

◆ **Colon-healthy choices:** A recent *British Medical Journal* study of nearly 50,000 adults looked at the relationship between diet and diseases such as diverticulosis (small pockets in the colon). What the study found: Vegetarians were 30 percent less likely to have diverticular disease. Meat eaters were 50 percent more likely to be hospitalized for this condition. Fibre helped too. Bottom line: Mom was right — eat your veggies. — Zorba Paster, MD

◆ **An old technique makes sinuses feel like new.** A neti pot is a small device used to rinse out nasal passages with saline solution. It helps alleviate allergy symptoms, moistens dry noses and provides relief from chronic sinus infections. Note: While nasal rinsing can be helpful, it shouldn't replace medical treatment for serious infections.

◆ **Happier holiday hint: Give back.** Contribute to (or organize) a drive for toys and gifts, clothing, or groceries for the local food bank. Bring cookies or small gifts to hospital patients or nursing home residents. Drop off a treat at your local fire or police station. Giving to others puts positive feelings back into the season.

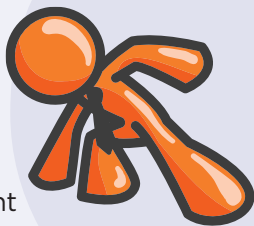
Put the Brakes on Holiday Weight Gain

Turn Setbacks into Successes

The road to success is curved, much like the letter “S” it starts with. And around every bend lies the possibility of setbacks. Don’t get hung up. Keep working your way around the corners with this advice:

Stop beating yourself up.

No achievement was ever realized without difficulties and even failures along the way. Most successful people leave many failures in their wake.



Shrug it off.

Own up to your mistakes, correct them and try again.



Set goals. Make goals measurable and reachable. Get to the end of your project or initiative one step at a time.



Stay motivated. Your chance of success is higher if your goal matches your values and beliefs. Identify the deeper reasons you want to achieve your objective, and let them drive you forward.



The dreaded “holiday spread” is that weight we fear gaining between Thanksgiving and New Year’s.

Most people keep those pounds after the holidays, especially if they continue eating rich foods. Keep your weight in check seven ways:

Eat a balanced breakfast with protein. It’ll help prevent overeating the rest of the day.

Stick to regular meals. Before a party, have some fresh fruit or yogurt so you can eat moderately when you arrive.

When making baked goods for others, deliver them promptly. Save only a few (or none) for yourself. Make cookies smaller so each one will have fewer calories.

Limit desserts to no more than one small serving (example: one cookie) per day.

Keep up your exercise program; consider adding a day or lengthening your workout to compensate for the additional calories.

Be assertive — don’t feel obligated to say “yes” to food offered. Also, stop eating when you’re full.



At a buffet, take a small plate and fill half with salad, veggies or fresh fruit; then add small servings of protein and starch. Avoid heavy dips, sauces and deep-fried foods. Wait at least 20 minutes before getting seconds.

Kids can gain weight too → Limit screen time during holiday vacation — plan physical activities for each day. Ask relatives not to give sweets as gifts. If your child does have treats, dole them out over time.

Where’s the Caffeine?

Maybe you watch how much caffeinated coffee, tea and cola you drink, but did you know that caffeine lurks in many other unexpected places? Some surprising caffeine sources:

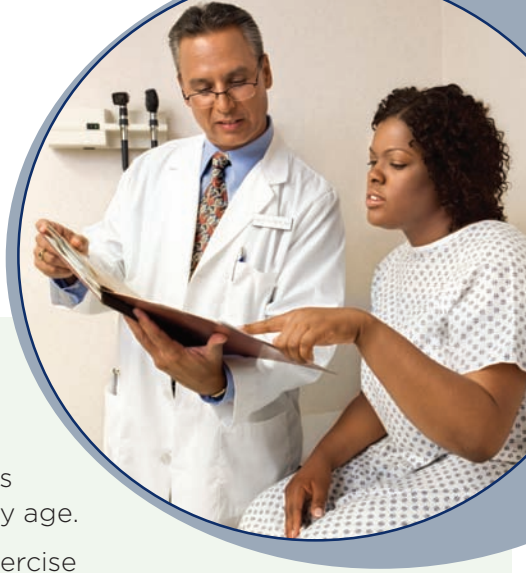
- Chocolate ice cream or frozen yogurt
- Dark chocolate
- Some brands of root beer, orange soda and cream soda
- Any product that’s advertised as “energized,” “energy” or “buzz”
- Flavoured non-herbal black and green teas
- Medications (weight-loss pills, pain relievers)

Caffeine amounts in these products vary greatly, so read labels carefully.



YEAR-END HEALTH Quick Check

The end of the year is a good time to take stock of your health. Take the brief assessment below and see how you're doing.



My Wellness Quick-Check

- I have completed all the screenings, tests and immunizations recommended for my age.
- I get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise (for example, walking) five days a week and do strength-building exercises twice weekly.
- I eat a varied and balanced diet and get the minimum daily servings of key food groups. (See www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php for recommended amounts.)
- I maintain a healthy weight (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/weights-poids/index-eng.php).
- I brush and floss my teeth daily and see my dentist regularly.
- I maintain balance in my life by maintaining healthy relationships, getting enough sleep, making time for myself and managing my stress.
- I am trying to improve my health by stopping bad habits such as alcohol or drug abuse, tobacco use, poor diet and not getting enough exercise.
- I am being treated for any health conditions I may have.



As the holidays draw near and your gift list grows longer, think about giving the gift of safety. Not only are the following gifts practical, but they are thoughtful as well:

UV Cell Phone Sanitizer:

It's easy for germs to hitch a ride on cell phones. A UV light sanitizing station is the answer to eliminating about 99 percent of those germs.

Digital Scanners: There are hardware and software scanning products that can help people to digitize insurance policies, medical records and legal documents, to name a few.

GPS: This is a lifesaver for all drivers. Newer-model GPS systems have become more sophisticated with traffic assistance, 3-D maps and larger screens.

UV Toothbrush Sanitizer: Simply insert your toothbrush in these devices and press a button. A UV light zaps up to 99 percent of germs.

Reflectors or Reflective Vests: Have a friend or relative who likes to walk or bike? Then give them a reflective vest or stickers to attach to their shoes or bike. Reflective gear is a safety must for those who can only walk at dusk or at night.

Driveway Safety Nets: This product keeps children and their toys contained and away from the street. It rolls up and stores easily when not in use.

These are just some of the gifts you can give to make someone's life a little safer.

PRODUCE PICK of the Month

Oh, My Delicious Clementines

Missing the fresh fruit of summer? Consider clementines, the small mandarin oranges often available during the winter holidays. Sold in net bags or small boxes, they are juicy and sweet, easy to peel and generally seedless, less acidic than regular oranges, but still high in vitamin C. Eat them for a quick snack, break them into sections and toss into salads or use the sections to decorate desserts.



Mail Order FRESH



Edible goodies travelling long distances are a welcome treat at holiday time and other special occasions. For busy homemakers, home delivery of mail order foods is the ultimate time saver. To ensure freshness of meats, seafood, cheesecake and other perishable foods, follow these guidelines to reduce risk of food borne illness:

Shipped perishables must be packed with a cold source.

On delivery, open the package immediately and check edibles with a food thermometer; contact the company if food reads above 4°C (40°F) before eating or storing it.

When you mail foods, always ship them at the start of the week to avoid having them sit in a post office or shipping facility over a weekend, increasing risk of spoilage.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

phone: 800-871-9525

fax: 205-437-3084

e-mail: editor@personalbest.com

website: www.personalbest.com

Managing Editor: Susan Cottman

Executive Editor: Liz Carey

Advisors: Marica Borovich-Law, MBA;
John Brennan, MD, CCFP; Cara Rosenbloom, RD

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World on Your Plate: By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Cuisine Down Under

If you want to serve an Australian meal in your home, stick with plenty of fresh vegetables, fruit and lean protein. Common vegetables are similar to North American fare and include asparagus, broccoli, peas, spinach, tomatoes and eggplant. The flourishing orchards of Australia grow citrus fruits, grapes, melons, berries, apples and cherries.

Inland Australia is known for lamb, while the coastal towns have an amazing selection of fish and seafood, including shrimp, barramundi and oysters. Australia's climate makes barbecuing commonplace, and this is a healthy way of cooking meat and fish without any added fat.

Australia's history is a rich tapestry, and the local food is reflective of this colourful past. Traditional foods eaten by Australian Aborigines are called Bush Tucker, and have been around for over 40,000 years. These intriguing dishes include staples such as damper (unleavened bread baked in the coals of a campfire), kangaroo, emu and tabbies (crayfish). Bush Tucker gets its spicy tang from local herbs such as lemon myrtle, wattle seed and mountain pepper.

Britain brought a meat-and-three-vegetables meal pattern to the land down under. Heavy, fatty foods such as meat pies, sausage rolls and Sunday roast remain popular to this day, but aren't your best choices if you're watching your waistline. Plus, these foods tend to be bland and rely heavily on salt for flavouring. A better bet is to dive into Mod Oz — or Modern Australian cuisine — which includes local, fresh ingredients paired with Bush Tucker classics.

No tour of Australian food can be complete without mentioning Vegemite, the home-grown brewer's yeast spread that's a staple in most kitchens. While it's rich in B-vitamins, it's also high in sodium. Vegemite kicks up toast and sandwiches and certainly puts an authentic spin on your Australian meals — but remember that a little bit is all you need.



Sesame Chicken Party Bites

Marinade:

- 25 ml (2 tbsp) reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 25 ml (2 tbsp) honey
- 5 ml (1 tsp) sesame oil
- 5 ml (1 tsp) minced garlic
- 1 ml ($\frac{1}{4}$ tsp) ground ginger
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) sesame seeds
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (113 g or 4 oz each), into bite-size pieces

- Mix marinade and set aside.
- Toast sesame seeds in large non-stick (dry) skillet over high heat for 1-2 minutes; stir constantly to avoid burning. Remove from skillet.
- Toss chicken in marinade and marinate for at least 1 hour. Pour off excess marinade; add sesame seeds and mix to coat chicken.
- Heat skillet to medium high and sauté chicken 8-10 minutes, allowing all sides to brown.
- Place on serving plate, garnished with chopped scallion. Option: If desired, serve with a dip combining wasabi and light soy sauce

Nutrition Facts

MAKES 8 (57 G OR 2 OZ) SERVINGS.

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 139	
Total Fat	4.3g
Saturated Fat	.9g
Cholesterol	48mg
Sodium	186mg
Total Carbohydrate	5.4g
Dietary Fibre	.4g
Sugars	4.3g
Protein	18.6g

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