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HealthyLiving

Party hearty and healthy!

If you're looking forward to a jolly time at some festive holiday parties this month, don't let us stop you. We love parties! But we do want to help you stick to your healthy eating goals while you're having all that fun. Follow our tips to enjoy all the parties December has to offer, without having to pay for it later.

- Don't go hungry. Snack on healthy, filling foods before you leave the house. You'll be less tempted by high-calorie options if your stomach isn't growling. Good pre-party bets include a handful of nuts, cheese and crackers, or half a turkey sandwich.
- Once you arrive, drink a glass of water to help you feel full and avoid overindulging. And don't head straight for the food – make a point of greeting friends or introducing yourself to new people.
- When it does come time to eat, fill at least half your plate with fruits and vegetables (and go easy on the dip).
- Leave just a little space on your plate for a small sample of whatever unhealthy treat you're craving, but eat that last, after you've filled up on the more nutritious offerings.
- Position yourself for success. If you're standing by the buffet table or facing the food while seated, you'll be tempted to "graze." Turn your back to the table, and focus on having fun, not having food.
- Limit alcohol. Not only are alcoholic drinks loaded with calories, they tend to weaken your resolve to eat better. If you do indulge, avoid high-calorie holiday drinks and stick with light beer or a glass of wine instead.

When you are the host planning the party, include options that allow your health-conscious guests to make smart choices. Offer water and other non-alcoholic beverages. Include healthy, low-fat choices like fresh fruits and vegetables on your buffet table. And use the following tips to make lighter versions of your favorite holiday dishes.

- Substitute whole-wheat flour for up to half (or more) of the white flour called for in a recipe.
- Use evaporated skim milk instead of whole milk or cream in baked goods, sauces, and soups.
- Use reduced-fat yogurt to replace all or part of the sour cream or mayonnaise in a recipe.



CLICK HERE for more ideas on how to make your homemade favorites healthier.

Give a Gift of Fitness

Show loved ones you really care this holiday by giving gifts that support their healthy fitness goals. Give a fitness DVD, a reusable water bottle, or a pedometer. If you have the budget to really splurge, go for a gym membership, tennis lessons, or golf clubs.

Another idea is to baby-sit or do errands for your loved ones, so they'll have time to exercise. And it doesn't have to take long: The American Cancer Society recommends adults get 30 minutes of physical activity, above and beyond usual activities, on 5 or more days per week.

Or offer to help a reluctant exerciser stay motivated by working out together. Whether you're walking around your

neighborhood or encouraging each other to eke out one more rep on the weight machines, the chance to socialize will help the workout seem more like a play date and less like a chore.

What can you do in 30 minutes? Take a walk, jump rope, dance to music on the radio, or ride a bike. The point is to get moving.

And the best thing about it? You can give the same gift year after year. So you'll never be stuck without a holiday gift idea again!



[CLICK HERE](#) for tips on making fitness work with your busy lifestyle.

It's Good to Be Good



You likely already know that volunteering can help you feel good about yourself while doing something nice for others. But did you know that people who volunteer are actually healthier?

A study by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency, found that volunteers live longer, have lower rates of depression and have less risk of heart disease.

Research suggests that volunteering is particularly healthy for older adults and those who volunteer at least 2 hours a week:

- A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the sense of accomplishment they get from it.
- Another study found that volunteering led to lower rates of depression in people 65 and older.
- People who volunteered after recovering from heart attacks reported less despair and depression – two factors that have been linked to death in heart patients.
- People over age 70 who volunteered about 2 hours a week felt healthier, functioned better, had lower levels of depression, and lived longer.



[CLICK HERE](#) to find out how you can volunteer for the American Cancer Society.

Make Dinnertime Family Time



With work, school, extracurricular activities, athletics, and the demands of modern life, it's not easy to find time to enjoy a quiet supper with your entire family. But study after study reveals that when families eat an evening meal together, kids are more likely to do well in school; stay away from tobacco, drugs, and alcohol; and talk with you more. As a bonus, everyone is more likely to eat healthier, a key behavior in avoiding obesity and weight-related health issues.

This is particularly true for teenagers, but that's just when it gets even harder to get the family together. So how do you do it? Start small: Aim for 2 times a week. Then, plan a menu: Whole-wheat spaghetti with tomato sauce and steamed broccoli makes a delicious, quick, and inexpensive meal. Finally, set some ground rules: no TV, cell phones, video games, or other electronic distractions during the meal.

You can choose to invite friends, or keep it to just your immediate family. Have conversation; reconnect with your family during a special time set aside just for each other.

With so much going on, it's not always possible to focus on the most important people in our lives. But with a little effort, commitment, and spaghetti, the benefits are worth it.

Winter-weather Workouts



When the weather turns cold, you can take your workout routine inside. But if you're an outdoor-lover, gym training or mall walking may not do it for you. In that case, you need to know how to stay safe while exercising outside in winter.

- Take extra time to warm up properly. When it's cold out, muscles may be at greater risk of injury because they're colder and tighter.
- Dress in layers that you can remove as soon as you start to sweat and then put back on as needed. Start with a thin layer of synthetic material that draws sweat away from your body. Avoid cotton, which stays wet next to your skin. Next, add a layer of fleece or wool for insulation. Top this with a waterproof, breathable outer layer that's suitable for the temperature and wind chill.
- If it's dark, wear reflective clothing or tape. Choose footwear with enough traction to prevent falls, especially if it's icy or snowy.
- Wind chill extremes can make outdoor exercise unsafe even if you dress warmly. Wind can chill you through your clothes, and it can cause frostbite on any exposed skin. If it's well below zero out or the wind chill is extreme, you may want to choose an indoor activity until it warms a bit.
- Wear sunscreen on exposed skin. You can get burned even in winter, depending on where you live.

Almost everyone can do some kinds of exercise safely during cold weather. But if you have health conditions, especially asthma or heart problems, ask your doctor first.

Help Your Loved Ones Manage Their Medications

Research suggests older people are taking increasingly more medications. This is good news because it means that doctors have more ways to treat people for serious diseases like cancer that affect older people more often.

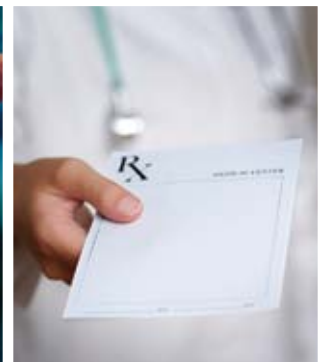
Unfortunately, taking several different drugs increases the chances the drugs will interact with each other. One or another drug could stop working, or have worse side effects. It can also be hard to keep track of when to take them all.

To help your loved ones manage their medications, keep a list of everything they are taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and any vitamins, herbs, or other supplements. This list should include the following:

- Name of the drug
- Dose (number of milligrams [mg] per pill; this is usually on the medicine bottle)
- Schedule (which days of the week and what times of the day it is taken)
- Reason for taking it
- Doctor who prescribed it (if the patient sees more than one doctor, one may not know what the other has prescribed)

Don't forget the medicines the patient takes every now and then or "as needed" – for instance, drugs for pain, fever, itching, or sleep. The patient can keep a copy of this list in a wallet or purse so that it's there in case of emergency.

Be sure the list is taken to each of your loved one's doctor appointments. Have the doctor's office make a copy. Update it each time a medicine gets added, taken away, or if a dose changes.



[CLICK HERE](#) for a printable chart to help you list and organize all your loved one's medicines.



Pistachios, please!

Splitting open a handful of pistachios provides you with a healthy, delicious snack, and even a bit of entertainment. According to the Food and Drug Administration, an ounce and a half of most nuts – including pistachios – may reduce your risk of heart disease.

Don't overdo it though. Even though the fat in nuts is healthy, fat is still a concentrated source of calories.

Pistachios are a traditional ingredient in baklava, a sweet, nutty pastry. Our lightened version offers a full, nutty flavor, but without all the fat and sugar. It's from the American Cancer Society cookbook, *Celebrate! Healthy Entertaining for Any Occasion*.

Baklava with Fruit Compote

Baklava:

- ¾ cup chopped pecans*
- ¼ cup chopped pistachio nuts*
- ¼ cup sesame seeds*
- ½ cup honey*
- 1-¼ teaspoons lemon juice*
- 1-¼ teaspoons cinnamon*
- 3 sheets phyllo dough*

Fruit Compote:

- ¼ cup orange juice*
- ¼ cup apple juice*
- ¼ cup honey*
- 2 small apples, peeled, cored and cut into wedges*
- Powdered sugar and cinnamon for garnish*

Preheat oven to 400°F.

To prepare baklava: Mix pecans, pistachios, sesame seeds, honey, lemon juice and cinnamon in a bowl.

Gently unwrap phyllo dough from its package so that it lies flat. Using a sharp knife, cut the phyllo into 5 x 5-inch pieces, totaling 16 pieces. Stack 2 pieces of phyllo on top of each other to form 8 squares.

Spread approximately 1 tablespoon of nut mixture in the center of each square of phyllo. Bring the corners of dough together and pinch above nut mixture to seal. Set each phyllo packet on a lightly greased cookie sheet.

Bake for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Set aside.

To prepare fruit compote: Combine juices, honey and apples in a saucepan. Simmer 5 to 10 minutes or until apples are tender.

Spoon warm fruit compote over each piece of baklava and serve immediately.



CLICK HERE to order this and other great books from the American Cancer Society bookstore.

In the Next Issue: • Health Benefits of Humor • Ice Skating for Fun and Fitness • Simple Steps to Healthier Eating

Articles contributed by Stacy Simon and Becky Slemons.

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