

Holiday Cheer?

Do the holidays bring to mind thoughts of wonderful food, relaxed conversation with family and friends, and the excitement of gift giving (and receiving)? The holidays are fun, and even magical for little and big kids alike. But they can also be stressful.

It is common to spread ourselves thin by doing too much in a short time period. The tendency for many of us to overspend on gifts and say “yes” to every party and family get-together can leave us feeling depleted and not particularly joyful! Taking care of yourself is the best thing you can do to maintain your health and sanity this season.

Speaking of stress reduction, a soothing warm beverage or cocktail may do the trick, just be mindful that their calories quickly add up. Choosing a skinnier version of a similar beverage can save you hundreds of calories and maybe even a pound or two.

Lastly, the holidays can be particularly challenging for individuals who have food allergies or intolerances. Learn how to safely navigate the party circuit if you or a loved one have special diet needs.

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Beat Holiday Stress

The good thing about holiday stress is that it is predictable, and this knowledge can help you to

prepare for it. The cooking, greeting cards, and shopping on

• Write up a schedule, which your list of things to do may not go

away, but they can be modified to include realistic goals that you want to accomplish each day or week. A

make the season less hectic. It may schedule of small doable tasks can be even be time to re-evaluate what is

truly meaningful as you bid adieu to • Cut down on the number of one year and embark on another.

Perhaps starting a new tradition attend, to avoid burnout. Be honest such as the giving of your time for a

with yourself (and your family) about cause you are passionate about can your feelings. The holidays can bring satisfaction and renewed

heighten existing family tension and energy. The following tips can help you may want to plan an “exit-time”, you manage stress so that the

in advance. holiday season is joyful and • Don't neglect your health. meaningful. Maintain your exercise and healthful

eating habits or engage in some form • Take card writing off of your list, of physical activity (like walking) if or simplify the process. Skip you are not already doing something.

handwritten holiday cards, send Regular exercise is one of the best photo cards with a preprinted ways to reduce stress and may even sentiment, or narrow your list of fight depression.



often rival homemade dishes, and no

one will know the difference. • Write up a schedule, which your list of things to do may not go

includes realistic goals that you want to accomplish each day or week. A

schedule of small doable tasks can be even be time to re-evaluate what is

less overwhelming. • Cut down on the number of one year and embark on another.

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Beware of those Beverages!

From soothing hot drinks to creamy concoctions, there is never a shortage of yummy beverages when the holidays roll around! Before you indulge, look at what you're drinking this season so you don't end up resembling the jolly man in the red suit. Below is a list of the most calorie holiday drinks, as well as, their more skinny counterparts.

| | |
|--|---|
| Starbucks Grande Egg Nog Latte <i>Calories: 460; Fat: 21 g.</i> | Starbucks Grande Cinnamon Dolce Latte <i>Calories: 260; Fat: 6g.</i> |
| McDonalds McCafe Frappe Mocha (16 oz.) <i>Calories: 450; Fat 20 g.</i> | McDonalds McCafe Iced Mocha (16 oz.) <i>Calories: 250; Fat: 12 g</i> |
| Land O Lakes Holiday Classic Egg Nog (4 oz.) <i>Calories: 180; Fat 8 g.</i> | Fleishmann's Egg Beaters Low Fat Egg Nog (4 oz.) <i>Calories: 140; Fat: 3 g.</i> |
| Ultimate Godiva Chocolate Martini (4 oz.) <i>Calories: 395; Fat: 10 g</i> | Olive Garden Chocolate Martini (4 oz.) <i>Calories: 260; Fat: 3.5 g</i> |

Simple Seasonal Slimming Strategies

You may have heard the depressing figure that the average weight gain over the holiday season is five or more pounds. In reality, most of us gain about a pound so you can breathe a sigh or relief. Five percent of us gain the dreaded five to 10 pounds. However, a pound of weight each year weight can add up to substantial and unhealthy weight gain. Therefore, it's a good idea to plan a little before running the party circuit and the following tips can help:

- **Eat a filling breakfast that includes protein and fiber to keep you energized.** Oatmeal with fruit and nuts or a hard-cooked egg with whole grain toast are two good examples.
- **Do not skip meals to save room for the big feast.** You will be more likely to indulge on appetizers, and over-fill your plate with foods that are usually highly caloric. Instead have two to three well-balanced, smaller meals to keep your blood sugar on an even keel.
- **Choose wine or light beer over a mixed drink and save about 100 calories.** Drinks

that are made with multiple kinds of alcohol are more caloric than their single alcohol counterparts. For example, a white Russian packs in 425 calories per serving, while a pomegranate and champagne spritzer has roughly 100 calories per serving.

- **Fill your plate with lower calorie vegetable and fruit sides and take smaller portions of rich dishes.** Load up on cranberries, whipped squash or baked sweet potatoes, and green beans or other vegetables without sauces.
- **Choose appetizers wisely.** Grab a handful of nuts, chilled shrimp, or hummus with vegetables instead of chips and dip or canapés with rich fillings.
- **Wear more fitted clothing to help you from eating until you are uncomfortable in your clothes.** Avoid wearing loose clothing and unbuttoning your trousers since this can make over-eating more tempting.
- **Maintain your exercise routine or get some type of physical activity.** Walking, cross country skiing, and even yoga can boost mood enhancing neurochemicals, which can help fight stress.

Lighten up Your Holiday Favorites

| Replace that... | With this... |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Cream</i> | <i>Condensed milk or fat-free half and half</i> |
| <i>Bacon</i> | <i>Proscuitto, Canadian bacon, or smoked turkey</i> |
| <i>Dry bread crumbs</i> | <i>Rolled oats or crushed bran cereal</i> |
| <i>Sugar</i> | <i>Half the amount; Agave syrup, or Stevia®</i> |
| <i>Salt</i> | <i>Fresh or dried herbs, citrus fruits, or flavored vinegars</i> |

Food Allergies and the Holidays

Holiday gift shopping and food preparation can leave the most calm of us, feeling a bit frazzled. If you or a loved one has food allergies or intolerances, the holiday season can be especially difficult. The most common allergies are to dairy, peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, soy, fish, shellfish, and wheat. According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately eight percent of adults and four percent of children have food allergies and these numbers are on the rise. It is likely that you may be in the company of or host an individual with a food allergy this holiday season. Holidays are tricky because of the amount of convenience or pre-made foods that are often on the menus at holiday gatherings. In addition, food may be served buffet style which can increase the

potential for cross contamination.

The holidays can be challenging when it comes to managing your food allergies or intolerances.

However, this does not mean that you have to be a hermit or refrain from

eating someone else's food entirely. It is always a good idea to communicate with a host in a respectable time frame before a get-together. Not only will this give you piece of mind, but it will be greatly appreciated by the person giving the party.



Managing a food allergy or intolerance is challenging any time of the year, and especially around the holidays. The following tips can help you enjoy this holiday season:

- Ask if a particular food has been made from scratch or was purchased. A beautiful dish of sugar cookies may seem safe to an individual with a tree nut allergy, but they may contain traces of nuts if store bought.
- Inform friends and family about your allergy to decrease the risk that you may be exposed to a problem ingredient.
- Offer to bring a safe dish to a gathering that everyone can enjoy, or ask if you can bring prepared dishes for yourself.
- If your child has a food allergy, prepare allergy-free treats that they can bring to school or parties.
- Review restaurant menus with the manager or chef in advance of dining out to determine what foods you can safely eat.
- If you are hosting a party and have a guest with a food allergy, avoid cross-contamination. Utensils, dishware, hands, sponges, and surfaces that have contact with food or saliva can be potential sources of an allergen.

