



Positive Pulse Wellness Newsletter

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"Promote and protect the wellness of our community through education, programs, and services."

Inside this issue:

Holiday Healthy Eating Guide	1
Holiday Stress and Depression	2
Volunteering, Life Satisfaction, and Mental	2
Brandi's "Clean Eating" Recipe	3

Special points of interest:

- * Challenge Option 1: Complete the "A Very Merry 30-Day Workout" for the month of December. Optional Modification: Complete half of the daily requirements
- * Challenge Option 2: Volunteer at least 1 hour of your time each week for the month of December to help someone in need.

Holiday Healthy Eating Guide



The holiday season is all about family, fun and food! Getting your family to eat heart-healthy, especially during the holidays, takes effort. This guide includes great tips and recipes to help you navigate the holiday season in a healthy way.

Tips:

- *Choose wisely*, even with healthier foods. Ingredients and nutrient content can vary by brand and preparation.

- *Compare nutrition information* on package labels and select products with the lowest amounts of sodium, added sugars, saturated fat and *trans* fat, and no partially hydrogenated oils.

- *Watch your calorie intake*. To maintain weight, consume only as many calories as you use up through physical activity. If you want to lose weight, consume fewer calories or burn more calories.

- *Eat reasonable portions*. Often this is less than you are served.

- *Eat a wide variety of foods* to get all the nutrients your

body needs.

- *Prepare and eat healthier meals at home*. You'll have more control over ingredients.

- *Look for the Heart-Check mark* to easily identify foods that can be part of an overall healthy diet. Learn more at heartcheck.org.

Sodium:

- *Limit your sodium*. Did you know that many of your favorite holiday dishes may be packed with sodium? Breads and rolls, poultry, and canned soups are three common foods that can add sodium to your diet. When shopping for ingredients to prepare your holiday meal, compare the labels and choose options with the lowest amount of sodium.

- *Savor the flavor*. Use herbs and spices, like rosemary and cloves, to flavor dishes instead of salt or butter.

- *Rinse away*. When using canned beans or veggies, drain and rinse in a colander to remove excess sodium.

Baking:

- Instead of butter, substitute equal parts unsweetened applesauce.

- Use a lower-calorie sugar substitute.

- Substitute low-fat or skim milk instead of whole or heavy cream.

- Instead of using only white flour, use half white and half whole-wheat flour.

- Instead of adding chocolate chips or candies, use dried fruit, like cranberries or cherries.

- Use extracts like vanilla, almond and peppermint to add flavor, instead of sugar or butter.

Cooking:

- Use vegetable oils or soft margarine instead of butter.

- Use whole-grain breads, rice and pasta instead of white.

- Bake, grill or steam vegetables instead of frying.



Holiday Stress and Depression

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. Here are a few tips from Mayo Clinic.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 home-made gifts; start a family gift exchange.

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.

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.

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 physical activity into each day.

Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.



Volunteering, Life Satisfaction, and Mental Health

Why might we see a connection between volunteer activities and longer and healthier lives? Evidence suggests that volunteering has a positive effect on social psychological factors, such as one's sense of purpose. In turn, positive social psychological factors are correlated with lower risks of poor physical health. Volunteering may enhance a person's social networks to buffer stress and reduce risk of disease.

The connection between volunteering,

social psychological factors, and social networks has been captured by what has been termed "social integration theory" or "role theory", which holds that an individual's social connections, typically measured by the number or social roles that an individual has, can provide meaning and purpose to his or her life, while protecting him or her from isolation in difficult periods. However, research also suggest that volunteer activities offer those who serve

more than just social network to provide support and alleviate stress; volunteering also provides individuals with a sense of purpose and life satisfaction.

~NationalService.org~





Brandi's "Clean Eating" Recipe

Fig-Apple-Sage Stuffing

Ingredients:

- 1 24-oz loaf whole-wheat bread trimmed of crust and cut into 1/2" pieces
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 to 3 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 large white onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 tsp child powder
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 10 to 12 unsweetened dried figs, chopped

- 2 apples, cored and chopped
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth, plus addition 1/2 cup as needed
- 1 1/2 tbsp chopped fresh sage

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Divide bread among 2 rimmed baking sheets and arrange in a single layer, transfer to oven, and bake for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring once, until lightly toasted.
2. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, heat oil on medium-high. Add carrots, celery, and onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in thyme, rosemary, chile powder, salt and pepper. Add figs and apples and stir well and combine. Remove from heat, add

bread and stir to combine. Stir in broth. Stuffing should be uniformly moist but not wet; if needed, add additional 1/2 cup broth. Stir in sage. Stuff turkey and cook according to recipe.



~www.cleaneatingmag.com~