



WEEK SIX

The holiday season is in full swing. Continuing to make the commitment to a healthy lifestyle is either becoming second nature or it's harder than ever because of the seemingly endless holiday festivities. This week's newsletter will provide you with great tips and strategies to help you party smartly while still enjoying all the sights, smells and sounds of the season.

A Season of Balance, Joy and Good Cheer: **Eat Smart, Party Smart**

It's party season! But don't let a few parties sabotage your efforts to maintain without gaining. Celebrate the themes of balance, joy and good cheer with these five strategies.

Enjoy the joy.

1. Enjoy the company first, the food second.
2. When you arrive at a party, relax and wait 30 minutes before eating.
3. Remember your intention to reunite with good friends and family, share laughter and cheer, and celebrate the season.

Keep your appetite in check.

1. Do not skip meals and "starve" yourself during the day before a party, or you'll likely end up overeating.
2. Drink plenty of water, and eat light, regularly-spaced meals during the day.
3. Have a piece of fresh fruit or low-fat cheese before going to a party. Don't arrive hungry.

Look twice, eat once.

1. Take a second look at all the food options before you make a selection. Survey the entire buffet table and decide which dishes you desire the most.
2. Make a pact with a friend or family member who is also attending the party to only take one plate of food. Place only small amounts of food on your plate.
3. Choose your indulgences wisely and savor them. There are too many opportunities to eat great food during the holiday season to settle for food that is so-so.
4. Balance your indulgences with fruits and veggies.
5. If you're asked to contribute food to a potluck meal, be sure to take a healthy choice. Or, if you are in charge of the menu, plan healthfully and use some of the delicious recipes from *'Tis the Season to Lighten Up*.

Choose your beverages wisely.

1. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit your intake to one or two drinks and sip them slowly. One alcoholic beverage contains between 150 to 450 calories. Alcohol calories are more likely to be stored around your waist (i.e., the dangerous abdominal weight gain or apple shape) and may also reduce your self-control over your food intake.
2. Use calorie-free mixers such as club soda, diet tonic water and diet soda pop.
3. Beware of calories in punch. The combination of ingredients, such as soda pop, fruit juice, fruit-flavored beverages, ice cream or sherbet results in a high calorie concoction. Substitute diet soda pop, reduced calorie juices and sugar-free fruit-flavored drink mixes in your favorite punch recipes.
4. Look for hot beverages at parties. They take longer to drink and are often more satisfying. Try some of the recipes in this week's newsletter.

The material contained in this Newsletter has been selected to provide general background and useful information regarding maintaining weight or avoiding the cumulative effects of gradual weight gain during the holiday season. It is not intended to be complete or tailored to your specific needs. You should discuss the information, facts and tips with your doctor. You should not engage in physical activity, which may have injury and health risks associated with it, until you confirm with your doctor that it is appropriate for you. If you experience any pain or discomfort, call your doctor. The material contained in this Newsletter is not designed to replace either medical advice or medical treatment.

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Maintain perspective.

1. One day of overindulging or not exercising won't cause you to gain weight. It takes days of excessive eating and under-activity to gain weight.
2. Enjoy your indulgences, but try to be reasonable. Stop eating when you feel full, no matter how delicious it tastes. Learn how to truly eat and enjoy, rather than overeat and regret.
3. Return to a place of balance the following day... without guilt.

Describe two more of your own eat smart, party smart strategies:

Party Talking Tips

Holiday gatherings offer the opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones. Here are six tips to start or strengthen any relationship no matter what the occasion.

1. Be genuinely interested in others.
2. Invite conversation by asking open-ended questions.
3. Speak in terms of other's interests.
4. Talk less, listen more.
5. Listen with your full presence and undivided attention.
6. Express your sincere appreciation.

Conversation Starters

Are you tired of the same old, ho-hum holiday chit chat? Here are a few questions to provoke interesting conversations at holiday parties or anytime.

1. If you could talk to yourself at the age of 10, what advice would you give yourself?
2. If you could be any age again for one week, what would it be?
3. What historical event would you most like to be witness to?

Plan lots of party activities to ensure there is more to do than just eat. Set up card games, interactive games or board games. Pass out trivia contests, scavenger hunts or questionnaire party games to help strike up conversation. Play physically active games such as Twister®, dancing music video games or other interactive video games. Download a mix of dance music and clear out a room for dancing.

Search the Internet for other fun conversation starters and party game ideas to liven up and get any holiday party moving in the right direction.

Highmark Resources

Highmark's tailored web-based weight management program, Balance™, is an excellent resource for getting and staying active this holiday season.

When you are ready to begin, it only takes a few minutes to get started. Here's how:

1. Go to Highmark's website at www.highmark.com. Choose your member site.
2. Complete the login process, entering your user name and password.
3. Choose the "Your Health" tab and then click on "Improve Your Health."
4. Choose the program in which you wish to enroll

Additional Resources

Log onto the American College of Sports Medicine's website at www.acsm.org for ideas, motivation and support to help you be more active.

HOLIDAY PARTY FOODS LIGHTENED UP

Quick Party Ideas: No Recipe Required

- **Veggie wraps.** Wrap an array of finely chopped vegetables with low-fat cream cheese in whole wheat flour tortillas. Slice them into bite-size pieces and hold them together with toothpicks.
- **Fruit platter.** Prepare a colorful plate of fresh fruits and serve with a low-fat yogurt dip. Or skewer fresh fruit on colorful toothpick or bamboo skewers to make fruit kabobs.
- **Hummus or fresh salsa.** Serve either or both with baked whole wheat bagel chips, baked whole grain tortilla chips or whole wheat pita wedges.
- **Shrimp cocktail.** Just pick up a package of frozen cooked shrimp and place in a bowl of cold water to thaw. Open up a bottle of a good cocktail sauce, and you're set. Or pick up ready-made trays at your favorite grocery store or seafood restaurant.
- **Mini fruit and vegetable kabobs.** Arrange a colorful assortment of pineapple chunks, cherry tomatoes and green peppers on bamboo sticks. Heat in a skillet with two tablespoons of olive oil. Arrange on a party platter and enjoy.

Holiday Mocktail Hour

Eggnog

Number of Servings: 6

1 quart skim milk
 1 cup egg substitute
 1/4 cup granulated sugar (or sucralose sugar substitute)
 1/2 cup instant vanilla pudding mix
 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Mix all ingredients in a blender. Chill for at least three hours and stir or shake well before serving.

*For an even lower calorie alternative, use sugar-free pudding mix.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 131 calories, 1g total fat, 9g protein, 22g carbohydrate, 209mg sodium

Christmas Wassail

Number of Servings: 32

1 gallon apple cider
 1 quart orange juice
 1 cup lemon juice
 1 quart pineapple juice
 24 whole cloves
 4 sticks cinnamon
 1/2 cup granulated sugar (or sucralose sugar substitute)

Mix all ingredients and simmer (very low heat) for 1 to 2 hours. Or mix ingredients in a crock pot and heat on low setting until hot. Serve warm. Leftover wassail may be stored in refrigerator and warmed in the microwave.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 98 calories, 0g total fat, 0g protein, 24g carbohydrate, 4mg sodium

Cranberry Cooler

Number of Servings: 82

1 quart low-calorie cranberry juice
 1 quart club soda or carbonated water
 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice

Mix all ingredients. Serve over ice and garnish with lemon or lime.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 30 calories, 0g total fat, 0g protein, 8g carbohydrate, 4mg sodium