Chronic Disease Prevention Bulletin

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Make Your Holiday Season Healthy!

The holiday season can be a hectic one. You might be busy preparing your house for guests, competing with the crowds of people going to the mall to buy gifts, or fighting the temptation of eating all those goodies lying around the office. There is hope, however. With a little planning, you can make this time of year one in which you stick to your healthy lifestyle.



Diet Tips

Parties are abundant this time of year, most of them stocked with food that tempts us from our healthy eating plan. Don't let this discourage you! There are some things that you can do to combat the holiday party food.

- Counteroffer the more high calorie foods by bringing a lighter alternative. This assures a lower calorie food that will be on your healthy plan.
- Curb your appetite before you go to the party by eating a healthy snack at home. Try something that is rich in fiber to help keep you feeling full.
- Choose a smaller plate at the party. Instead of using a large plate for the offerings, grab a bread or dessert plate. You may be surprised to find that you are full after one smaller plate, especially if the food is higher in calories and fat.
- Choose your food in moderation. Does the dessert look too good to pass up? Have it, but get a smaller piece.
 Also, make sure you load up on the fruits, vegetables and whole grains to balance your higher calorie choices.
- Decrease the amount of alcohol you consume.
 Alcoholic beverages can be high in calories, which can easily add up. They can also cause you to stray from your plan by causing you to lose focus. If you drink, do so in moderation and stay away from mixed drinks, which can be higher in calories than beer or wine.



Exercise Tips

It's easy to forget your exercise routine in the rush of the holiday season: it's cold and dark outside, you're busy, and you might be away from your house and routine. Here are some techniques to battle the excuses:

- Recruit the person you are visiting to exercise with you. This allows you to have a workout buddy that will know the good places to walk, gyms that accept guests, or parks where you can play a sport. This also works in reverse if you are hosting guests in your home. Many people are grateful to have someone ask them to go walking, and it gives you a chance to catch up with each other.
- Try a workout video. Workout videos take up very little space in your suitcase, and most people have the technology to be able to play them. You might be surprised how your solo workout turns into an aerobics class as people see how much fun you are having!
- Bring your own equipment to ensure that you have a wonderful workout. Stretchy bands can be used to work most of your muscles and take up very little space in your suitcase. Also, jump ropes can be stored easily and can give you a wonderful cardiovascular workout, and yoga mats take up very little space in your car. Don't forget your athletic shoes for a morning walk or jog!
- Be the one to take the kids to the park to play. As they play, you can run around with them! Do pull-ups on the monkey bars, try step-ups on a bench or curb, play tag, or try kids' games like wheelbarrow races. Having fun with them will give you a workout while getting them out of the way of the people preparing the meal—everyone benefits!



Stress Relieving Tips

- This time of cheer and love can sometimes turn into a time of stress when we have a lot to do in a small amount of time. By making use of some stress reduction techniques, you may find the holiday season to be full of all the warmth, generosity, and love that it is meant to have.
- Take some time to relax. Spend some time everyday at rest. Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and relax your muscles and mind. Focus on your breathing. This can help reduce your heart rate and blood pressure. Try techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, or prayer to further enhance your relaxation skills.
- Write about your stress. Sometimes getting your thoughts down on paper can help clarify how you are feeling and why. If you know that information, it becomes much easier to find a positive solution.
- Reducing the importance of a stressor. This can help deflate its impact. If you can't have homemade rolls at dinner is that as important as you are making it out to be? You will still be with loved ones sharing a meal, and everyone will still enjoy himself or herself.

■ Play out the "what if's". Determine if what is causing you stress is deserving of the amount of energy that you are giving it. Ask yourself what is the worst thing that can happen and how likely that is to occur. If it did, would it change your life? Is there anything that you can do to change the result? Doing this can decrease the level of stress that you feel.

(Source: www.intelihealth.com, reviewed by the faculty of the Harvard Medical School. July 7, 2005.)

Smoking Cessation Tips



AVAILABLE EVERY DAY FROM 8 a.m. TO MIDNIGHT at 1-877-270-STOP or TYY 1-877-777-6534.

If you're like most smokers, you probably started in your early or mid teens. The reasons for smoking your first cigarette may not be the same reason you still smoke. Two things, though, often keep people smoking: nicotine – the highly addictive drug found naturally in tobacco that is as addictive as heroin or cocaine; and being hooked on the act of smoking.

Quitting smoking is not easy, but it can be done. To have the best chance of quitting successfully, you need to know what you're up against, what your options are, and where to go for help.

- How to quit. There is no one right way to quit, but there are some key elements in quitting smoking successfully. These 4 factors are crucial:
 - o making the decision to quit
 - o setting a "quit date" and choosing a quit plan
 - o dealing with withdrawal
 - staying quit (maintenance)
- Making the decision to quit. The decision to quit tobacco use is one that only you can make. Others may want you to quit, but the real commitment must come from you. Of all the reasons to quit smoking, the ones that are important to you matter the most. Are you worried about your health? Are you worried about your children's health when you smoke around them? Is smoking getting expensive?
- Setting a quit date and choosing a quit plan. Now that you're ready to quit, you can pick your "quit date." This is an important step, and you should give yourself time to prepare and plan for it. Pick a date that gives you one to two weeks to get ready. Don't pick a date too far in advance. Too much time allows you to change your mind or think about reasons not to quit. New Year's Eve is a great day to quit smoking. There are several ways to quit, and no one way is the only right way. Some common methods are: quit "cold turkey" or abruptly, quit by

"tapering off" or gradually, use non-nicotine medicines or nicotine replacement therapies, quit by using support or counseling, or a combination of the above methods. On your quit day, follow these suggestions:

- Do not smoke
- Get rid of all cigarettes, lighters, ashtrays, and any other items related to smoking
- Keep active-try walking, exercising, or doing other activities or hobbies
- o Drink lots of water and juices
- Begin using nicotine replacement if that is your choice
- Avoid situations where the urge to smoke is strong
- Reduce or avoid alcohol
- Attend stop smoking class or start following a selfhelp plan
- Dealing with withdrawal. Withdrawal from nicotine has 2 parts the physical and the psychological. The physical symptoms, while annoying, are not life threatening. Nicotine replacement can help reduce many of these physical symptoms. But most users find that the bigger challenge is the mental part of quitting. What you're doing is not easy, so you deserve a reward. Put the money you would have spent on tobacco in a jar every day and buy yourself a weekly treat. You can also reward yourself in ways that don't cost money: take time out to read, work on a hobby, or take a relaxing bath.
- Staying quit. So you know that staying quit is the final, and most important, stage of the process. You can use the same methods to stay quit as you did to help you through withdrawal. Think ahead to those times when you may be tempted to smoke, and plan on how you will use alternatives and activities to cope with these situations. To get through these tough times, try the following:
 - Review your reasons for quitting and think of all the benefits to your health, your finances, and your family.
 - Remind yourself that there is no such thing as just one cigarette – or even one puff.
 - Ride out the desire. It will go away, but do not fool yourself into thinking you can have just one.
 - Relapse If a "slip" happens, don't give up. Just return to your original plan and quit again. It may take several attempts before you are successful. If one method doesn't work for you, try another.

Sources: American Cancer Society www.cancer.org & Live Healthy Georgia: www.livehealthygeorgia.org

