Holiday Hazards and Happiness: Indulgence Without Fear?

The holidays provide opportunities for fun and relaxation, but they also provide some challenges to living a healthy lifestyle.

Following are some tips on coping with holiday stress, too much less-than-healthy food and drink, exercise schedules run amok, and the changing seasons.
Stay Lean this Halloween!

• Obstacles:
  • Candy everywhere!
  • Pumpkin goodies everywhere!
  • It’s dark SO early!

• How to avoid those obstacles...

• [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfXyFAkxxwc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfXyFAkxxwc)
The Candy

• Buy candy RIGHT before the Trick-or-treaters come
• Buy candy you don’t like
• If you have your own trick-or-treater, have them sort their candy into things they like and things they don’t like
  • Give the stuff they don’t like away
  • Limit the amount of daily candy they do like
• Offer toys, stickers, or temporary tattoos instead of candy
The Pumpkin Goodies

• Try making savory pumpkin dishes (real food) instead of sweet (dessert)
• Use healthy sweeteners in pumpkin desserts
• See if you can replace oil with applesauce
• Make your own pumpkin spice latte
  • Cheaper and fewer calories
But it’s SO Dark!

• Run in the morning!
• Join a gym
• Find a buddy
• If you have to run at night
  • Wear reflective gear
  • Wear bright colors
  • Run against traffic
  • [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63RBCUVYY0U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63RBCUVYY0U)
  • WARM - UP!
Conflict Management

Holidays can be joyful, or can bring stress, tension and family conflict

Why can holidays bring conflict?
- Family systems thrive on sameness, but holidays bring changes
- New roles can be threatening
  - New boyfriends, girlfriends and spouses, etc.
Conflict Management

- Acknowledge that people may not get along
- De-emphasize the materialistic aspect of the holiday
- Emphasize the positive aspects of family and spirituality
Conflict Management

Recognize the need for private space
  ◦ Especially important for adolescents

Set differences aside for the gathering
  ◦ Avoid old-to-young criticism
Conflict Management

Use productive conflict management strategies
   ◦ Maintain a positive attitude
   ◦ Provide face-saving opportunities
   ◦ Don’t be disrespectful

Avoid repeating bad patterns

Try new positive behaviors
Conflict Management

Realize and accept that you are not going to change anyone’s beliefs

- Decline to respond to comments on your religious, political and social beliefs

Don’t let one negative encounter or experience define the holiday

- Think about the positives, such as seeing a baby walk for the first time
Conflict Management

Dealing with Common Holiday Family Conflicts

- Video – Wall Street Journal
Conflict Management

Create new family rituals
- May be especially helpful for blended families

Acknowledge your own limitations and needs
- Set limits on holiday spending
- Don’t try to be everything for everyone
- Keep your schedule realistic
- Set healthy boundaries
Conflict Management
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

1. Fill up on the healthy stuff
   ◦ Turkey
   ◦ Veggies
   ◦ Salad
   ◦ Sweet potatoes (unsweetened)
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

2. Pass or limit the unhealthy options
   - Rolls
   - Cranberry sauce (usually made with lots of added sugar)
   - Classical stuffing or dressing
   - Other high-carb, high-sugar options
### Thanksgiving Tips

#### 3. Cook healthy alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Option</th>
<th>Healthy Alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mashed potatoes</td>
<td>Mashed cauliflower or mashed turnips &amp; parsnips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green bean casserole</td>
<td>Swap fried onions for toasted almonds or caramelized onions; use fresh green beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranberry sauce or canned cranberry</td>
<td>Cranberry salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuffing</td>
<td>Homemade bread crumbs made w/ almond and/or hazelnut flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin pie</td>
<td>Crust-less or nut-based crust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

4. Eat like it’s just another day
   ◦ High protein breakfast
   ◦ Normal lunch with protein & veggies
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

5. Play!
   ◦ Great opportunity for some pleasant recreation.
   ◦ Get outdoors for a walk, or hike, or game of football..
   ◦ [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpRlIS5WhBw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpRlIS5WhBw)
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

6. Drink plenty of water
   ◦ Helps regulate appetite
   ◦ Lubricates body systems
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

7. Continue your regular fitness routine
   ◦ Hit the gym for a quick workout
   ◦ Don’t use as an excuse to go all out with food choices
Physical Activity Points

Add a high-intensity interval training workout TABATA
Take winter conditioning classes
Do your best to stick to your workout schedule, but realize it may be shorter than usual
Take other non-holiday activities out of your schedule to make time to work out
Book a beach vacation to motivate you to work out
Work out at home if you can’t make it to the gym
8. Go for an after dinner stroll
   ◦ Go for a walk with your dining companions
   ◦ Will help you digest your food and might even be a nice shared
     ◦ In diabetics, various studies indicate that walking after a meal improves blood sugar control.
Thanksgiving Tips

9. Enjoy your food
   - Be thankful
   - Focus on how good it tastes
   - Enjoy the moment
   - SLOW DOWN
   - Try not to allow feelings of guilt to get in the way
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

10. **Sleep!**

- Lack of sleep....
  - ↑ chance of grabbing a quick, high carb snack to get energy boost
  - Too tired to exercise
  - Altered metabolism
  - ↑ hunger: alters hormones (↑ghrelin ↓leptin) = eat more
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

11. If you’re going to drink alcohol, keep it in moderation
   ◦ Lowers inhibitions, makes it easier to justify 3rd helpings or poorer food choices
   ◦ Have a glass of wine or wine spritzer
   ◦ Alternate with water
Additional Drink Points for our consideration

Hangovers are due to dehydration, increased acid in the stomach and toxins the body releases to metabolize alcohol

Drink water
Eat toast with honey
Don’t eat greasy foods
Take ibuprofen
Drink light colored alcohol
Thanksgiving & Christmas Tips

12. Starts with the right mindset
   ◦ Focus on the meaning of the holiday
   ◦ Enjoying the relationships & spending time with people you care about
   ◦ Let food be a part of the celebration, not the purpose
   ◦ Ask yourself: “Is it worth it?”
Conclusion

• Worrying about your diet is the last thing you want to do on a holiday that celebrates thankfulness

• Have a positive mindset going into the day
  ➢ Focus on the flavor and nourishment of the food
  ➢ Enjoy the company and be thankful
  ➢ Slow down

• If you are hosting, make healthy, flavorful options

• If not hosting, bring healthy, flavorful options
Seasonal Affective Disorder

What is It?

- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs at the same time every year – Mayo Clinic

- Symptoms usually start in the Fall

- Less often, it starts in the Spring or Early Summer
Symptoms of Fall and Winter SAD:

- Loss of Energy
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Hopelessness
- Arms and legs feel heavy or “leaden”
- Difficulty Concentrating
Symptoms of Fall and Winter SAD:

- Oversleeping
- Social Withdrawal
- Loss of interest in activities
- Appetite changes – craving high carbohydrates
- Weight Gain
Symptoms of Spring and Summer SAD

Irritability
Agitation
Anxiety
Weight Loss
Poor Appetite
Insomnia
Symptoms of Reverse SAD:

In Spring and Summer, individuals with bipolar disorder may experience --

- Rapid thoughts and speech
- Agitation
- Hyperactivity
- Unbridled Enthusiasm out of proportion
- Elevated Mood
When to See a Doctor for SAD

Feeling down sometimes is normal, but see a doctor when:

- You are depressed for days at a time
- You are not motivated to do things you enjoy
- You notice your sleep and appetite patterns change
- You have thoughts of hopelessness or suicide
- You turn to alcohol for relaxation or comfort
Understanding SAD

Video

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
What Causes SAD?

The cause of SAD is currently unknown. The body’s chemical makeup, genetics and age probably play a role. It may be caused by:

- **Circadian Rhythms** – internal/biological clock
- **Serotonin Levels** – neurotransmitters affecting mood. Less sunlight causes drop in levels
- **Melatonin Levels** – mood and sleep
Risk Factors for SAD

- Living farther away from the Equator
- Having relatives with SAD
- Being Female
- Having Bipolar Disorder or Clinical Depression
What are the Treatments for SAD?

Light Therapy – Sitting a few feet from a specialized box that provides bright light

Medications – Antidepressants, e.g. bupropion (Wellbutrin), paroxetine (Paxil)

Psychotherapy
What are the Treatments for SAD?

Lifestyle and Home Remedies –

- Make your Environment Sunnier and Brighter
- Get Outside
- Exercise Regularly

- Supplements may help – St. John’s Wort, SamE, Melatonin, Omega-3 fatty acids
Light Therapy Research

Improvement in Fatigue, Sleepiness, and Health-Related Quality of Life with Bright Light Treatment in Persons with Seasonal Affective Disorder and Subsyndromal SAD

Rastad, Ulfberg & Lindberg – 2011 – Sweden

Two-group clinical trial with 49 participants

Results: “In conclusion, fatigue, sleepiness, and health-related quality of life improved in a similar way as measures of depression in persons with SAD and S-SAD following treatment with BLT.”
Questions?