



MAINTAIN DON'T GAINSM



'TIS THE SEASON TO LIGHTEN UP



WEEK FIVE

Welcome to Week five of 'Tis the Season to Lighten Up. We're midway through the holiday season, and hopefully you implemented some of the tips from last week's newsletter to help manage holiday stress. You've spent several weeks anxiously awaiting holiday parties and time off work to spend with family and friends. But with all the hugging, hand-shaking and togetherness of the holiday season, we often share the winter 'bug' that is going around. Suddenly your holiday memories are of decongestants, tissues and the living room couch. This week's newsletter will provide tools and strategies for staying well and enjoying the season in a state of optimal health.

A Season of Balance, Joy and Good Cheer: **In Good Health**

It's good to be reminded of some of the basic strategies for staying well to enjoy good health during the holidays as well as all year long.

- 1. Wash your hands often.** This is the best way to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria. Make it a point to wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after food preparation, before and after parties and, of course, after the restroom. Keep hand sanitizer with you and use it frequently.
- 2. If you're sick, stay home.** If your children are sick, keep them home from school. Give the gift of wellness by keeping your illness to yourself.
- 3. Avoid over-use of antibiotics.** Only take antibiotics when they are absolutely necessary, and take them as directed.
- 4. Clean up appropriately after preparing food, and store foods properly.** Kitchen counters and cutting boards harbor bacteria. After use, clean them thoroughly with hot water and disinfecting soap, especially after contact with meat, poultry or fish products. Don't leave
- 5. Keep kitchen and bathroom sinks clean.** Clean up water around faucets and disinfect sinks to minimize the spread of bacteria and viruses during hand washing and food preparation. Replace your toothbrush after you've been ill.
- 6. Stay current on your and your family's immunizations.** It's best to get up-to-date on immunizations, such as a flu shot, before the holidays, but if you haven't done so yet, now is the time.

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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Think Positive

Positive thinking is a vital tool for stress management. Research shows that people with optimistic outlooks experience many health benefits, including greater resistance to colds, decreased negative stress and reduced risk for heart disease.

You can learn how to think positively by periodically evaluating your own thoughts. When you identify negative thoughts, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them. Remember the saying: if you think you can or you think you can't, either way you're right.

Super Foods, Super Habits, Super Immunity

The following ten foods are touted as some of the healthiest because of their superior nutrition. As a bonus, they are low in calories and may help boost your immune system to fight off winter colds and flu. Strive to eat at least one of these foods on a daily basis to help you enjoy the season in optimal health.

1. Apples
2. Almonds
3. Blueberries
4. Broccoli
5. Red beans
6. Salmon
7. Spinach
8. Sweet potatoes
9. Vegetable juice
10. Wheat germ

Stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water and green tea. But cut back on foods and other lifestyle habits that tax the immune system. These include excessive caffeine, alcohol, tobacco and processed foods high in sugar and fat. To further support your immune system and lessen your chance for winter colds and flu, get adequate sleep, be as physically active as possible and manage your stress — all the basis for good health.

Give the Gift of Relaxation

Here are great ideas for giving the gift of relaxation for the holidays. Or maybe you can give friends and family members some ideas for you!

Gift Idea:

For Whom:

Aromatherapy candles or oils	_____
Bamboo plants	_____
Flower-of-the-month club membership	_____
Gift certificate from a hair salon or spa	_____
Gift certificate for a facial or body wrap	_____
Hot and cold gel pack eye masks	_____
Manicure or pedicure gift certificate	_____
Massage gift certificate	_____
Movie tickets	_____
Relaxation or guided imagery CD or DVD	_____
Scented soaps and lotions	_____
Tabletop fountains	_____
Yoga accessories (blocks, straps, mats, bags, etc.)	_____
Yoga mat with yoga DVD	_____
Yoga or Pilates class gift certificate	_____
Yoga apparel	_____

Highmark Resources

Take advantage of Highmark’s online programs to help you enjoy the holiday season in good health. Choose from many options including:

- HealthMedia® Care™
- HealthMedia® Breathe™
- HealthMedia® Nourish™
- HealthMedia® Overcoming™ Insomnia

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
2. Choose your member website.
3. Complete the login process, entering your user name and password.
4. Choose the “Your Health” tab and then click on “Improve Your Health.”
5. Choose the program in which you wish to enroll.

Reflect and Reward

Take a few minutes to reflect on the strategies that you are using to lighten up your holiday season, maintain your weight and live the season in a spirit of balance, joy and good cheer. It's important to take periodic inventory of your progress, recognizing accomplishments and assessing areas for improvement. Be sure to reward your efforts in non-food, healthy ways. (Refer to the list of ideas for "Gifts of Relaxation.") Record your insights here:

My Accomplishments

My Areas for Improvements

My Goal for Balance, Joy and Good Cheer

Set one goal to work on during the upcoming week to help you maintain your weight, as well as support staying well. Using the space provided, define your goal(s) for this coming week.

Don't forget to self monitor...

Check your weight to see if you are achieving your goal of maintaining, not gaining.

Date:

Weight:

HOLIDAY RECIPES LIGHTENED UP

Banana Split Dessert

Number of Servings: 24

- 1 cup crushed chocolate graham crackers
- 1/2 gallon reduced-fat vanilla ice cream, slightly softened
- 1/2 gallon reduced-fat cherry vanilla ice cream, slightly softened
- 4 bananas, peeled and sliced
- 1 large can crushed pineapple, in juice, well drained
- 1/2 cup sugar-free hot fudge sauce, optional

1. Sprinkle crushed grahams in a deep 9x13-inch pan.
2. In a large bowl, combine ice creams, banana slices and pineapple. Mix with a wooden spoon until well blended and spread evenly over crushed grahams.
3. Place in freezer until firm — about 4 to 6 hours of overnight.
4. Before serving, heat hot fudge sauce according to directions and lightly drizzle back and forth over top of ice cream, if desired.
5. Preparation Option: Make individual portions by placing holiday muffin cup paper liners in muffin tins and filling each cup with the crushed grahams and ice cream mixture. Drizzle with hot fudge sauce, if desired.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving (without fudge sauce): 175 calories, 4g total fat, 5g protein, 33g carbohydrate, 128mg sodium

Meringue Cookies

Number of Servings: 48

- 3 egg whites
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

1. Beat egg whites and sugar together to form stiff peaks.
2. Carefully fold in dates and walnuts.
3. Drop by spoonfuls onto a baking sheet covered with parchment paper.
4. Bake at 300 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until cookies are dry. Let rest before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

Nutrition Facts Per Cookie: 39 calories, 1g total fat, 1g dietary fiber, 1g protein, 6g carbohydrate, 4mg sodium

HOLIDAY RECIPES LIGHTENED UP

Fruited Trifle

Number of Servings: 16

2 small packages sugar-free instant vanilla pudding mix

3-1/2 cups cold 1% milk

2 (15-ounce) cans fruit cocktail, packed in juice, drained

2 cups fresh strawberries

6 kiwi fruit, peeled

1 prepared Angel Food Cake, cut into bite-sized chunks

1. Combine pudding and skim milk in a large deep bowl. Prepare according to package directions.
2. Fold drained fruit cocktail into prepared pudding. Set aside.
3. Slice strawberries and kiwi. Line the bottom and sides of a trifle bowl or large deep glass bowl with strawberry and kiwi slices, alternating with rows of strawberries and rows of kiwi.
4. Next place 1/4 cake chunks in the bottom of the fruit-lined trifle bowl. Top with 1/4 pudding-fruit mixture. Repeat layering three times, finishing with pudding mixture.
5. Garnish with strawberry and kiwi slices, if desired.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 150 calories, trace total fat, 4g protein, 25g carbohydrate

Cranberry-Pistachio Biscotti

Number of Servings: 48

2-1/4 cups white whole wheat flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon salt

3 large eggs or 3/4 cup egg substitute

1 cup granulated sugar

1-1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

1-1/4 cups unsalted pistachios, chopped

3/4 cup dried cranberries, chopped

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
2. In a medium bowl, beat the eggs and sugar together with a large wooden spoon until blended. Beat in the vanilla.
3. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir until thoroughly blended.
4. Stir in the pistachios and cranberries.
5. Spoon the dough onto the prepared baking sheet, forming two strips about 13 inches long and 2-1/4 inches wide, placing them 3 inches apart. With wet fingertips, smooth the tops and side to fingertips. (They don't have to be perfect).
6. Bake at 300 degrees F for 40 minutes, or until golden and firm to the touch. Set the baking sheet on a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 275 degrees F.
7. Using a sharp serrated knife, cut each strip on the diagonal into 1/2-inch slices. Stand the slices 1/2-inch apart on the baking sheet. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until lightly toasted. Set the baking sheet on a wire rack to cool completely.

Nutrition Facts Per Cookie: 59 calories, 2g total fat, 2g dietary fiber, 2g protein, 9g carbohydrate, 33mg sodium

HOLIDAY RECIPES LIGHTENED UP

Bejeweled Fruit Salad

Number of Servings: 8

1 cup sugar-free lemon, apricot or peach-flavored yogurt
1 tablespoon reduced-fat mayonnaise or mayonnaise-style salad dressing
1/4 teaspoon grated orange peel
2 tablespoons orange juice
1 pint strawberries, sliced (about 1 cup)
1 kiwi fruit, peeled and chopped
1-1/2 cups seedless green grapes
1 (11-ounce) can mandarin oranges, packed in juice, drained
1/4 cup dried cranberries or blueberries
Whipped topping, optional

1. In a small bowl, mix yogurt, mayonnaise, orange peel and orange juice; set aside.
2. Combine fruit in a medium bowl.
3. Gently fold yogurt mixture into fruit mixture and serve immediately. Top with a small dollop of whipped topping, if desired.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 52 calories, trace fat, 2g dietary fiber, 2g protein, 11g carbohydrate, 29mg sodium

Piña Colada Dip for Fruit

Makes dip for one large fruit tray

2 (8-ounce) containers sugar-free vanilla-flavored yogurt
1 teaspoon dark rum or rum extract
1/4 cup unsweetened coconut, toasted
1/4 cup crushed pineapple, packed in juice, drained

1. In a small bowl, combine all ingredients, mixing well.
2. Serve immediately with assorted fresh fruit slices. Or cover and refrigerate until serving time.
3. Preparation Tip: To toast coconut, arrange in a single layer on a small baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees F for 2 to 5 minutes or just until golden. Or place in a single layer in a glass pie plate and microwave for 30 seconds at a time until toasted. Watch carefully, as coconut burns easily.

Nutrition Facts Per 2 Tablespoons: 22 calories, 1g fat, 2g protein, 2g carbohydrate, 12mg sodium