



Holiday Choices You Can LIVE With!

During the days surrounding Christmas and New Years we sometimes sli—i—i—de when it comes to healthy eating and exercise. Agreed?



There are many excuses that keep us from getting the exercise and healthy food we need and want. There are also many ways to be proactive and ensure that the holidays ahead don't slow us down or kill us outright!

First, let's talk about exercise. Perhaps you are too busy in the kitchen to get to your regularly scheduled yoga class or workout.

You might try using a home version on tape or CD which will eliminate the “dressing for the public” and driving parts of that time equation. An-

other thing that works well during the holidays is to take your holiday guests out with you for a walk. A stroll in the neighborhood with your family can become a family tradition. It's also a way to meet and greet your neighbors.

Grandchildren who are visit-



ing you will LOVE the opportunity to get outside, benefiting from the fresh air and quality time with grandparents. And that works two ways: proud grandparents also love the opportunity to show off their latest heirs!

Next, consider simplifying some of those traditional holiday dishes that could

clog your arteries. Lighten up! This

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Websites of interest:

- americanheart.org
- realsimple.com/holidays

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month's recipe corner features simple, delicious holiday ideas that just happen to be lighter! Also included are two recipes for sweet potatoes that won't send your family member with diabetes into a coma with a high blood sugar!

Remember to start your day with a healthy breakfast. One serving of whole grain cereal with fresh fruit and skim milk can give

you all the energy you need to get those morning

chores done. You don't have to turn on the oven or stove-top so you are also conserving energy!

Finally, consider that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. If you are invited to a holiday gathering, think about bringing a fat-free dip with raw vegetables and fruits



(crudités). If you start your dinner with a healthy appetizer, chances are you won't have room for multiple desserts!



Going out for dinner? The same principle works if you begin at home with a lighter cocktail. Doing this may eliminate the desire for a higher calorie alcoholic beverage, thereby saving you calories and money. It will also make driving home safer and easier!

When dining out you might consider having your appetizer or salad at home. Included in this month's newsletter are new recipes for Christmas day as well as a tasty appetizer or salad for two—all choices you can LIVE with!

In the spirit of keeping it simple:

- Brown paper tied with red yarn is a simple and inexpensive way to wrap gifts.

- A pine cone or cluster of berries can make an attractive addition.



- When you are ready to set your table, keep it simple by using a red table cloth with white napkins. The contrasting



colors work well together. A centerpiece of ev-

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Holiday Choices You Can LIVE With! (continued)

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ergreens, Christmas ornaments and items gathered from nature can be simple yet elegant.



- To save time and energy, consider letting your family guests prepare their

own beds with fresh linens you lay out for them. Save your energy and time for more walking and visiting with your guests!

Holiday Stress

The Christmas-New Year holidays are supposed to be an enjoyable and relaxing time to visit with friends and family! However, many Americans find the holidays to be one of the most stressful times of the year.

The proof is in the unfortunate number of heart attacks during this jolly time. In fact, the number of heart attacks peaks during three days of the year: Christmas day, the day after Christmas, and New Year's Day. Talk about "bah humbug"!

The exact cause of

this relationship is unknown, but many clinicians believe it is due to holiday stress.



Also, some individuals tend to delay doctor ap-

pointments and other appropriate medical attention during the holiday season. Also consider food. "Eggnog, anyone?"

The holidays are not a time to turn a blind eye toward your health. Take care of yourself!

Don't skimp on sleep.

Bundle up before going out into the cold.

Don't land yourself into debt by overspending. Talk to family and friends about simple gift-giving or creating memories rather than "buying more stuff!"

Keep up your strength and stamina through your regular exercise routine.

Don't forego your vegetables and fruits—a simple salad and a piece of fruit at each meal can help protect you against colds!



Recipe Corner

Before Dinner:

- Sparkling Cranberry Juice Cocktail
- Orange Spritzer
- Shrimp/Avocado Cocktail
- Crudités to Go

With Dinner:

- Savory Sweet Potatoes with Pecan Gremolata
- Simple Sweet Potato Biscuits

Sparkling Cranberry Juice Cocktail for 2!

12 oz. diet cranberry juice

2 oz. freshly squeezed orange juice

Juice of one fresh lime

6 oz. diet lemon lime soda or diet ginger ale

Mix first 3 ingredients in a pitcher. Pour into tall glasses over ice. Add sparkling lemon lime soda or ginger ale and serve with a straw. This drink has all



the flavor and flair of the most elegant “Cosmopolitan” cocktail but with fewer calories and no alcohol! If you’re entertaining you can even serve it in a holiday martini glass.

Orange Spritzer

This is the non-alcoholic version of a “Mimosa”.

Juice of two oranges, freshly squeezed

1/3 cup club soda

Squeeze oranges and strain juice. Pour into festive holiday glasses. Slowly add club soda. Garnish serving tray with holiday greenery and berries. Serves 2.



Shrimp/Avocado Cocktail

1 pound fresh shrimp, peeled

3 bay leaves

3 Tablespoons Tony Chachere’s Seasoning

1 avocado, peeled and sliced

Juice of one lime

Lettuce leaves

Pour two quarts water into medium sized pot. Add the Tony Chachere Seasoning and bay leaves. Bring

water to a boil and add shrimp. Return to boiling point and cook for about three minutes.

Drain shrimp and

chill for 15 minutes. Prepare plate by layering lettuce leaves, sliced avocado and shrimp. Sprinkle both avocado and shrimp with lime juice. Serves 2-3 people as an appetizer or salad.





Recipe Corner

Crudités to Go

Crudités are traditional French appetizers comprised of sliced or whole fresh vegetables, often



served with dip as an appetizer. It only takes a few minutes to wash and prepare fresh strips of carrots, red pepper, asparagus, jicama (starchy root vegetable), and celery. Arrange in stemware for a festive look.

For a quick and easy dip, mix one envelope dried vegetable soup mix with two cups plain Greek yo-

gurt. Stir thoroughly and serve. This recipe is a good source of calcium and protein and adds no fat to the holiday diet!

New Ways with Sweet Potatoes

Simple Sweet Potato Biscuits

Ingredients:

1/3 cup light soft margarine
2 3/4 cups reduced-fat all-purpose baking mix

1/2 tsp. baking powder

1 cup
cooked,
mashed
sweet potato
1/3 cup skim
milk



Directions:

Cut light soft margarine into baking mix with a pastry blender or 2 forks until mixture



is crumbly. Whisk together sweet potato and milk; add to dry mixture, stirring with a fork, just until dry ingredients are moistened.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead gently 4 or 5 times. (Dough will be moist.)

Pat or roll dough to 1/2-inch thickness; cut with a 2-inch round cutter. Place biscuits on lightly greased baking sheets or parchment paper. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes



or until golden brown.

Original recipe from Angela Johnson, Atlanta, Georgia. December 2006 *Southern Living*, modified slightly.



Recipe Corner

Savory Sweet Potatoes with Pecan Gremolata

This dish is a light and healthy alternative to the usual high fat, marshmallow-laden holiday sweet potato casserole. It's delicious and the colors will look fabulous on your buffet table!

Ingredients:

1 large sweet potato (about 1 lb.)

1 tablespoon olive oil

1/2 cup Pecan Gremolata (parsley, garlic, lemon condiment)

Directions:

Peel sweet potato, and cut across into 1/4-inch-thick slices using mandolin (kitchen utensil with slicing blade) or food processor or sharp knife. Pour oil into a large skillet. Over medium heat, add 1/2 of potato slices,

and sauté 6 to 8 minutes. (Don't over-

cook!) Repeat process with the other half of potatoes.

Remove from skillet; pat dry on paper towels. Layer slices in serving dish, sprinkling pecan mixture between the layers. Serve immediately or refrigerate and re-

heat in microwave.

Pecan Gremolata

1/3 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1/4 cup finely chopped toasted pecans

1 teaspoon lemon zest

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/4 teaspoon salt

Stir together

parsley, pecans, lemon zest, garlic, and salt in a small bowl. Add 1/2 cup pecan mixture to cooked sweet potatoes. Leftovers?

This mixture can also be used on a green salad to



make it tastier!

These two recipes originated in *Southern Living's* October 2012 issue. They have been modified slightly to be more heart-healthy.

Bah Humbug! And Don't Forget to Exercise!

Where did the year 2012 go? The holidays are here with all the hustle and bustle that accompanies them.

Will you travel to visit friends and family or will you have guests in your home? Have you cleaned



and decorated the house? Did you plan the menus and do all the grocery shopping? Have you purchased

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Bah Humbug! And Don't Forget to Exercise!

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gifts and wrapped them? Perhaps you'll even spend time during the holidays volunteering. It can be a very busy time. Don't forget to squeeze in some exercise!

You may not have time to maintain the amount of exercise that is normal for you, but any amount of physical activity you can muster is much better than none. It is easier to resume your usual exercise routine after the holidays if you have been active in some way in the interim.

When you have a few minutes to spare, make them active. If you don't have time to go to the recreation center for your usual exercise class, you can most likely take a 10 minute walk outside or inside around the house, while the fruit cake is baking.

You can peddle your stationary bike while the towels tumble in the clothes dryer. If you don't have

time for continuous exercise you can exercise by accumulating minutes throughout the day to total 20-30 minutes.

If you are visiting family, offer to watch the grandchildren—take them for walks, rake and bag leaves, build a snowman, or play games that get your bodies moving. You can dance, jump rope, play catch, play kickball or shoot baskets. Go biking. Use a Wii to play a video fitness game. If weather permits go to the park, push the swing, take a hike. Walk at a local mall. Create memories!

The important point is, don't let busyness keep you from spending some time exercising. Being active in December is as important as activity in July. Although the minutes of darkness are

greater in winter than summer, there are still 1440 minutes in 24 hours. You can most likely find 20-30 minutes during each day to exercise!

When the holidays are past, it will not be hard to return to your usual exercise if you have maintained some activity. If you weren't as active as you hoped to be, return to regular exercise gradually. Start with 5-10 minutes and continue adding a couple of minutes every few days until you are back to your normal routine.

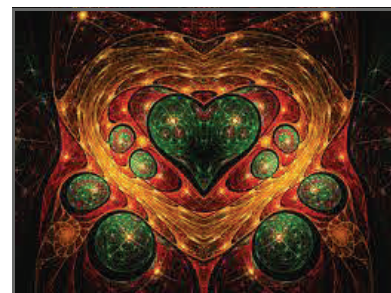


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News You Can Use!

The American Heart Association (AHA) recently held its annual conference from November 3-7, 2012. The purpose of the AHA's annual meeting is an opportunity for the country's leading cardiovascular doctors, nurses, researchers, and clinicians to learn from each other about cutting-edge research and findings regarding heart health.



There were several late-breaking clinical trials presented at this meeting. Some of the intriguing results are summarized below:

FREEDOM Study

This study concluded that for patients with diabetes who had recently suffered a heart attack, coronary artery bypass surgery was more successful than percutaneous coronary angiography interventions (PTCA) in terms of all-cause mortality.

Message: Talk to your doctor about your options!

FORWARD Study

This study concluded that for patients who recently had atrial fibrillation (a rhythm disturbance in the heart) supplementing omega-3 fatty acids like fish oil for one year did not significantly reduce the risk of re-

current atrial fibrillation.

Message: Don't stop your omega-3 fatty acid just because of this study. Talk with your doctor about why it was prescribed for you.

The Physician's Health Study II

This study concluded that multivitamin supplementation in men (≥ 50 years old) did not have any significant effects in reducing the risk of a cardiovascular event.

Message: Eat your vegetables and fruits and don't count on multivitamins to make you healthy.

For further information, visit www.americanheart.org.