

Tips for a Healthy Holiday Season

Nutrition

Food is an important part of many holiday and family traditions. As a result, many people gain a little (or a lot of) weight between Thanksgiving and the New Year. What's to blame? The tempting treats? Increased emotional eating? Anticipation of a new diet and exercise plan that is to begin January 1st? Whatever the cause, here are a few more tips that coincide with the tips from last month. First, focus on weight maintenance vs. weight loss during the holidays, this is not the time to try and start losing weight. Maintaining present weight will be challenging enough. Second, DO NOT plan on dieting after the New Year. Anticipation of food restriction gets a person up for binge-type eating (the thought being, I can't eat this after Jan. 1st, I'll be on a diet). Third, eat a light snack before going to a party; it reduces the risk of overeating. Fourth, choose a beverage wisely. Many calories reside in sodas, fruit punch, egg nog, and other beverages. Try and drink water and diet sodas that are calorie free. Last, but certainly not least, maintain perspective. Overeating one day will not make or break your eating plan and it certainly will not make you gain weight! It takes days and days of overeating (I'm certainly guilty of that) to gain weight.

Fitness

Do not let the holiday time be a time to forget your exercise routine or let shopping substitute for exercise, although you may have to adapt your exercise schedule. You may shorten your routine, you may normally exercise 30 minutes, and perhaps you can do 15 or 20 minutes instead. Exercise whenever you can and with shopping in mind, park as far away as you can to get extra walking in. Finally, make it a family affair; invite a relative you rarely get to see to go for a walk and talk. Weather permitting, get out and play with the kids or perhaps a family football game (that might be fun if we get some snow). Remember, some exercise is better than none and it helps relieve stress (there can be a lot of that this time of year).

From the Nurses' Desk

Nurse Teia – Flu season is here! I would like to encourage all students with heart or lung disorders or a chronic disease such as diabetes, kidney disease or immune system problems to get their flu vaccine.

Nurse Amanda – Due to the increasing reports of outbreaks of the chicken pox among the vaccinated population, it is now recommended that infants and young children be given two doses of the Varicella vaccination and it is also recommended for children in child care centers, students in all grade levels, and persons attending postsecondary institutions. Contact the local health department or your Primary Care Physician to see if a booster is needed for your child.

Nurse Tiona – I just want to remind parents/guardians to make sure they are scheduling their children's yearly physical exams and dental exams every six months.

In closing, November was the beginning of the flu season. Remember hand washing and cough hygiene plays an important role in limiting the transmission of the flu. Persons at high risk (diabetic, asthmatic, elderly, etc) should consider getting the flu vaccine. Contact the Clay County Health Department or your personal physician about receiving the flu vaccine. Catch the newsletter again, next year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!