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NEWSLETTER OF THE
CITY OF TACOMA

HealthVine



'Tis the Season to Be Healthy

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A GIFT THAT LASTS A LIFETIME

There is one special holiday present that doesn't need to be wrapped: A commitment to live healthy together.

Research has shown that friends and family often have similar social behaviors. For instance, the risk of obesity has been suggested to increase if the person's social network is obese. Considering this, perhaps the reverse can be true? Maybe if you make healthy lifestyle changes and share them with friends, family and co-workers—they might live a longer and healthier life, too.

This holiday season instead of (or in addition to) partaking in the "typical" holiday exchanges, try one of these ideas:

Shareable and Healthful Gifts:

- * **Sign up for a self-enrichment class.** Take a cooking, exercise or ballroom dancing class with your spouse, partner or friend.
- * **Establish a weekly family/friend fun night.** Plan some healthful meals and fun activities as a consistent way to spend healthy, stress-free time with others.

Healthful Gifts for Individuals:

- * **Workout clothes.** It can be easier to get active if a person has the right attire.
- * **Home gym equipment.** Obviously, treadmills, elliptical machines and stationary bikes are a bit expensive—so, think back to the basics. Workout DVD's or a resistance band, jump rope, fitness ball and yoga mat are practical and helpful gifts.
- * **Energy bars and protein powders.** People on the go may appreciate refueling foods/drinks.
- * **Gift Certificates.** Despite what some people may think, gift certificates can be a great gift. This enables people to find their own perfect health and fitness gift.



02 **Maintain, Don't Gain:**
Learn how to stay healthy during the holidays.

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Make sure to double check if you qualified or not.

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Your Wellness Coordinator's favorites.

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HOW TO MAINTAIN AND NOT GAIN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The best attitude when it comes to food during the holidays (*and throughout the year*) is to not think of certain foods as being “good” or “bad”.

Rather, focus on your eating habits because these can, in fact, be good or bad.

Below are 10 healthy tips that can help to ensure that the turkey is the only one getting stuffed during the holiday season!

1. **Be practical.** Don't try to diet during the holidays; just aim to maintain your present weight.
2. **Exercise in the morning.** Doing so will help to ensure that your metabolism is revved up for the feast!
3. **Offer to bring a healthy dish.** That way you'll know there is something delicious AND nutritious to munch on.
4. **Don't arrive on an empty stomach.** Why? Skipping breakfast and/or lunch will likely cause you to overeat and consume more calories than you would have if you had eaten something beforehand.



Foods high in protein, like chicken or cottage cheese, help you to eat less later.

5. **Socialize away from the buffet table.** Conversations tend to take our attention away from the food, which will likely result in unconscious nibbling.
6. **Control your portion sizes.** The amount of calories, fat, and cholesterol you eat depends on both what you eat and how much.
7. **Eat a balanced meal.** Make sure that you fill your plate with a little of everything. This way, you'll still get to indulge as well as receive valuable nutrients and vitamins.
8. **Eat slowly.** It takes your brain about 20 minutes to get the message from your stomach that you are full. By eating slowly, you will be less likely to go back for seconds and/or raid the dessert table.
9. **Leave the table when you are done.** If you linger, you may be tempted to continue eating even if you are not hungry. Practice the “out of sight, out of mind” concept.
10. **Be assertive.** Don't feel as though you have to say yes to everyone that offers you food and drink. If you are not hungry, simply say so.



WINTER ACTIVITIES THAT ADD UP

Below are some numbers that you might want to consider when deciding whether or not to brave those cold winter days.

These calculations are based on a 150 lb. person performing 30 minutes of these activities at a moderate pace.

- Cross Country Skiing = 260 calories burned
- Downhill Skiing = 200 calories burned
- Snowboarding = 260 calories burned
- Shoveling Snow = 200 calories burned
- Ice Skating = 225 calories burned
- Snowshoeing = 260 calories burned

So if the weather isn't inspiring you to go out and play, hopefully these numbers might provide you that little extra push to possibly try something new, bundle up and get outdoors to stay active throughout the winter season.

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

It isn't uncommon to feel busy and stressed during the holiday season. The holidays tend to bring a dizzying array of demands—cleaning, baking, parties, shopping, wrapping presents, traffic congestion, entertaining and cooking holiday meals, to name a few. But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress and ease your mind.

- * **Leave work at work.** When you walk out the door on your last day of work before the holidays, set the intention that you will leave your work at the office because it will still be there when you get back.
- * **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or identical to last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones (i.e., if your adult child can't come to your house, celebrate together by sharing pictures, emails or videos).
- * **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, cleaning, visiting friends/family, etc.. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll prevent last-minute scrambling.
- * **Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then, stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.
- * **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. Furthermore, be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they are feeling the effects of holiday stress, too.
- * **Acknowledge your feelings.** If you can't be with your loved ones or someone close to you has recently passed away, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It is okay to take time to express your feelings and cry. You cannot force yourself to be happy just because it is the holiday season.
- * **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.
- * **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence will likely add to your stress and guilt. So, continue to eat healthy, get plenty of sleep and be active.
- * **Take a timeout** Make some time for yourself. Spending 10-15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything. At nighttime, start the book you've been wanting to read, play some calming music and reduce your stress by slowing your breathing and restoring your inner calm.



Important 2016 Wellness Incentive Reminder

If you successfully completed the requirements for the 2016 Wellness Incentive by Sept. 30, 2015, you qualified for the incentive:

- Completion of two (2) Journeys between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30, 2015.
- Completion of the Annual Health Compass between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2015.

Congratulatory letters were mailed to the homes of employees who successfully met the requirements. If you believe that you met the above requirements, but did not receive a letter, please contact your Wellness Coordinator, [Shannon Carmody](#).

Eligible members are entitled to appeal their Wellness Incentive determination until December 31, 2015. Please submit your [Appeals Form](#) per the instructions on the form no later than 12/31/15.

The 2017 Incentive Period is underway! This incentive period will run from Oct. 1, 2015 to Sept. 30, 2016. To learn more about the requirements and the incentive, please visit the [Wellness Microsite](#).

With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays. *Information in this section was adapted from [www.cdc.gov](#).

COOKING FOR A DIVERSE GROUP

If you are hosting this year's holiday feast, you might be challenged to come up with a menu. Cooking for a crowd can be difficult when your sister-in-law is a vegetarian, dad has diabetes and nephew suffers from food allergies.

So, before you start with your food preparation, find out what, if any, dietary restrictions your guests might have. A reasonable solution might be to offer a buffet that includes a variety of items. You also might encourage guests to bring their own main or side dish for the buffet.

- * **Vegetarians.** Consider offering options such as vegetarian lasagna or a stir-fry, in addition to traditional dishes such as turkey or ham.
- * **Diabetics.** For desserts, you might include a crust-less or bread-less fruit and/or dairy dish without added sugars.
- * **Nut allergies.** It may be best to avoid adding nuts to any dish. These types of sensitivities can be extreme for those with peanut and nut allergies.
- * **Gluten-free.** Consider offering gluten-free cornbread muffins for those who may not be able to eat wheat rolls.



EAT FOR THE HEALTH (AND TASTE) OF IT

In addition to understanding moderation and balance, adjusting your holiday recipes can make a big difference in the heart-healthiness of the meal(s). Luckily, modifying recipes does not require extra time. With simple changes you can cook “leaner”—and still prepare great-tasting food!

Easy Substitutions to Cut Calories, Fat and/or Cholesterol

Dairy Substitutes:

Cream: Evaporated skim milk, fat-free (FF) half-and-half

Heavy Cream: 2 Tbsp. flour whisked with 2 cups of FF milk

Sour cream: Light or FF sour cream, plain low-fat (LF) yogurt or 1/2 cup cottage cheese blended with 1-1/2 tsp. lemon juice

Meat Substitutes:

Ground beef: Extra-lean ground beef or lean ground turkey or chicken

Bacon: Canadian bacon, lean ham or smoked turkey

Sausage: Lean ground turkey or 95% fat-free sausage

Cream Soups:

Defatted broths or broth-based or FF milk-based soups

Whole Egg Substitutes:

Two (2) egg whites or 1/4 cup cholesterol-free liquid egg product or 1 egg white plus 2 tsp. oil

HINT: In recipes that call for two or more eggs (i.e., baking), substitute some (but not all) of the whole eggs. That way you will get the color and flavor of the yolk; but less cholesterol and fat. Also, baked goods can be rubbery when made with only egg whites.

Oil Substitutes:

Cooking oil (2 Tbsp. = 240 calories, 28 g fat): Cooking spray (10 calories, 1g fat) or oils lowest in saturated fat (cottonseed, olive, rapeseed (canola), safflower, sesame, soybean and sunflower)

Baking Substitutes:

Oil: Applesauce

1 ounce unsweetened baking chocolate: Three (3) Tbsp. Cocoa powder and 1 Tbsp. oil

COOKING UP A SIMPLE WORKOUT

The kitchen can become a great place to fit in some activity by simply practicing a few moves:

- * **Countertop pushups.** Place your hands on the countertop, stand a foot or two away from the counter and do some pushups while waiting for the water to boil, etc.
- * **Dishwasher squats.** For each item you load or unload from the dishwasher, complete a squat.
- * **Stand on one leg.** While you are washing dishes or stirring food, try standing on one leg to strengthen your core and increase your balance.



WINTER HOLIDAY RECIPES

“These are some of my favorite family recipes. Enjoy!”

—S. Carmody, Wellness Coordinator

PUMPKIN DESSERT

Ingredients

- * (2) 15 oz. cans pumpkin
- * (1) 12 oz. can evaporated milk
- * 1 cup sugar
- * 3 eggs (or 1/4 cup of egg substitute and 2 eggs)
- * 1 tsp. vanilla
- * (1) 18-1/4 oz. package yellow cake mix
- * 1 cup butter
- * 1-1/2 cup chopped pecans (optional)

Directions

1. Line a 13x9 baking pan with waxed paper and coat with cooking spray; set aside.
2. Mix pumpkin, evaporated milk and sugar. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Pour into pan.
3. Sprinkle with dry cake mix and drizzle with butter. Sprinkle with pecans.
4. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until golden brown. Cool completely in pan on wire rack. Invert onto a large serving platter; carefully remove waxed paper.

SAUSAGE EGG

BRUNCH

Ingredients

- * 8 slices French bread (cubed)
- * 3 cups grated cheddar cheese (try reduced-fat cheese, if possible)
- * 2 pounds link sausage (try lower fat alternatives like turkey or chicken). For the recipe, sausage should be browned and cut into bitesize pieces.
- * 1/2 pound sliced fresh mushrooms sautéed
- * 4 beaten eggs (try minimizing the amount of whole eggs used via the substitutions from Page 4)
- * 3/4 tsp. dry mustard
- * 2 cups milk (try to use 1% or FF)
- * 1 can of cream of mushroom soup (try 98% fat-free)

Directions

1. In 11 x 13 pan layer bread, browned sausage, cheese and sautéed mushrooms.
2. Pour egg mixture over this and refrigerate overnight.
3. Before baking, pour mushroom soup diluted and mixed with 1/2 can of milk.
4. Bake 1 hour and 20 minutes at 350°. Cover with foil last 15 minutes. Remove foil to brown.

CORN CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- * 1 large onion, chopped
- * 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- * 4-8 Tbsp. of reduced-fat or light butter spread
- * 2 eggs (or 1/4 cup of egg substitute and 1 egg)
- * 1 can whole kernel corn
- * 1 can creamed corn
- * 1 pkg. Jiffy corn muffin mix
- * 1/2 pint sour cream (try FF or light)
- * Whole jar minced pimento
- * Grated sharp cheddar cheese (try LF)

Directions

1. Sauté onion and green pepper in butter.
2. Mix in a large bowl eggs, 1 can whole kernel corn (juice, too), 1 can creamed corn, pimento, and Jiffy mix. Place in buttered (use cooking spray) 9 x 13 pan.
3. Spoon sautéed mixture over top (cut it in using a knife) then spoon sour cream over the top (cut it in using a knife) and sprinkle cheese over all.
4. Bake at 325° for an hour, until slightly firm. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

MAKE YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION A SMART ONE

It is that time of year when we all start thinking about making changes in our lives to improve our health and happiness. Some of us will aim to start exercising, while others may decide to eat healthier, manage finances better, or spend more quality time with family. Although the intentions of these goals are always noble, many of us often get discouraged or distracted when we get back into our daily routines.

So, why do many of our personal resolutions fail? Simply put, we don't always plan out HOW we are going to achieve those goals and whether or not they are even realistic. The best way to stick with your New Year's Resolution is to make it a S.M.A.R.T. one, here's how:

S—Specific, significant, stretching. Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help us focus our efforts and clearly define what we are going to do. Specific is the What, Why, and How of the S.M.A.R.T. model.

M—Measurable, meaningful (to you and your health), motivational. If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. In concept, the whole goal is a measure so if it's accomplished, it's a success. However, there are usually several short-term or small measurements that can be built into the goal. Choose a goal with measureable progress, so you can see the change occur.

A—Attainable, agreed upon, achievable, action-oriented. When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. If you set goals that are too far out of your reach, you probably won't commit to them. However, a goal needs to stretch you slightly so that it will require dedication on your part.

R—Realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented. This doesn't mean "easy". Realistic means "do-able". It means that the learning curve is not too steep; that the skills needed to accomplish the goal are available; that the goal fits with your personal plan for success.

T—Time-based, timely, tangible, trackable. Set a timeframe for the goal. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to work towards. If not, the commitment is too vague.



COMING SOON!

Now that the first year of the Tacoma Employee Wellness Program is nearing its end, we can begin focusing more of our efforts towards expanding our program outside of the RedBrick Health Portal. Here are some of the ways:

Gym Membership Discounts: We thank you for patience as we continue to finalize this project. Employees should expect the release of a comprehensive list of discounts in early 2016.

City-Wide Employee Wellness Survey: Your feedback is imperative as we grow and improve our wellness program. We look forward to hearing what type of activities, classes, campaigns, etc. you would like to see! These additions will help to compliment your efforts as you practice (and improve) your everyday habits.

"An arrow can only be shot by pulling it backward. When life is dragging you back with difficulties, it means it's going to launch you into something great. So just focus and keep aiming!"

—Unknown

