

WINTER 2009



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Stress-Less This Holiday Season

Tips and tricks to balance the stress that affects us this time of year

Maintain Don't Gain....For the Holidays!!

Each year, without exception, I am approached with the ever popular question of "So, how can I maintain my weight with all the holiday cheer quickly approaching?"

A large part of our holiday celebrations revolve around sharing food with our loved ones and friends, as it should. Food has had a long standing importance when it comes to celebrations and gatherings and serves as a wonderful purpose in pulling community together. Food not only feeds the physical body, but feeds our souls. The aromas, and different tastes and colors all "feed" our natural senses and can actually deepen our experiences creating fond memories. So plan on celebrating and enjoying the festivities!

However, there actually is a method to healthy celebrating. practicing good choices during this time of year is possible, and a great way to keep the stress levels down and your energy levels boosted. Here are some tips.... Have a fun and blessed holiday season:

•Starting your day with a good source of protein is crucial as protein regulates the blood sugar and maintains a steady level of energy reserves. Skipping breakfast can actually contribute to weight gain due to the insulin response. Insulin is our fat storing hormone, and protein regulates this hormone.

•When at a party go for the veggies and dip first, the meats and cheeses second and the fruits third. By then you will have had a great variety and the need for treats is not as desired.

•Festive drinks can be non-alcoholic! Punches are excellent. It is just as easy to stop at your local health food store, and purchase soda-type spritzes that are chemical free. and organic juices. The key is to avoid artificial sweeteners such as aspartame, high-fructose corn syrup, and artificial flavors.

•A great holiday drink is cranberry juice which has a cleansing action to the kidney and urinary tract. Add a few lemons or limes and you have a refreshing drink. Organic is best. If not available, traditional is still a good replacement for alcoholic beverages.

•For the holiday baking fanatic, try wholegrain recipes with dried fruit instead, and omit the fancy frostings!

•Drink plenty of water before meals to curb overeating. We tend to have larger portion sizes available to us during the holiday season. Also, avoid drinking water during meals as it dilutes the digestive process.

•Make sure you are keeping physically active. There's nothing like a nice brisk walk and then enjoying the warmth of a homemade fire with friends and family.

By: Elise Trasser ND



Special points of interest:

- Maintain, don't gain this Holiday Season
- Statistical reasons to balance stress
- How to beat the "winter blues"
- Stress: the effects it has on the entire body

Enhance Your Mood

What you should know about Serotonin

Serotonin transmits signals in the nervous system. It functions to elevate mood, balance cravings, regulate sleep, control muscle contractions, learning, and memory. Many drugs (including some anti-depressants) target the serotonin systems directly to suppress symptoms. This often creates unwanted side effects, and rarely identifies the cause. While there are natural alternatives, such as supplements with 5-HTP (a serotonin precursor) lifestyle changes and identifying the cause of mood fluctuations is key to your health. There are many things one can do to elevate serotonin levels and enhance your mood.

- * Positive thinking
- * Love
- * Giving
- * Being in nature
- * Exercise
- * Sunlight
- * Adequate sleep
- * Laughter

The Gift of "Presence"

With so many tasks to attend to during the holiday season, it's easy to become preoccupied with all that needs to be done rather slowing down and enjoying the moment. Getting caught up in the frenzy of our "to do" list can leave us feeling stressed out and irritable; unable to enjoy the real gifts that the holiday season brings. This year, give yourself the gift of "presence". Take time to be truly absorbed in the present moment of whatever you're doing. Spend a few minutes to breathe slowly and deeply. Take time to really notice the sensory extravaganza of the season. As a wise person once said "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift, that's why we call it the present." ~Patti Breitbach-Rashid

In search of Winter Sunlight

The main cause of "winter blues" and how to prevent them

Research Shows:

Statistical reasons to balance stress

- * 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress.
- * Seventy-five to 90% of all doctor's office visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints.
- * Stress can play a part in problems such as headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, asthma, or arthritis in addition to depression and anxiety.
- * The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) declared stress a hazard of the workplace. Stress costs American industry more than \$300 billion annually.
- * The lifetime prevalence of an emotional disorder is more than 50%, often due to chronic, untreated stress reactions.

With the winter season in full swing, short days are upon us. During these months many people experience mood and health changes with the season. A lack of sunlight is one major cause of the "Winter Blues".

Some of the symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorders (SAD) include oversleeping, fatigue or a overall lack of energy, sweet/salty food cravings, and even depression. SAD's are easily treatable and preventable. Full-spectrum light bulbs use special filtered glass to simulate daylight in the home. This helps create positive hormonal balance.

Sunlight also plays a key role in vitamin D synthesis. Vitamin D is most important for immunity and bone health.

Many people show a deficiency in this vitamin especially during the winter. Several types of fish, liver and eggs are all good sources of vitamin D. While nothing can completely replace the real thing, supplementation during this time may be beneficial. The most important thing to remember is that even though people tend to spend

much more time inside, sunlight still can get through the clouds. Leave blinds open during the day, and spend as much time outside as you can in order for your skin to absorb as much sunlight as possible. Making a conscious effort to expose yourself to the outdoors will surely have a positive effect on your health and mood during the short winter days.



Bring in this coupon to receive 10% off Vitamin D or 5-HTP supplements or SAD lights

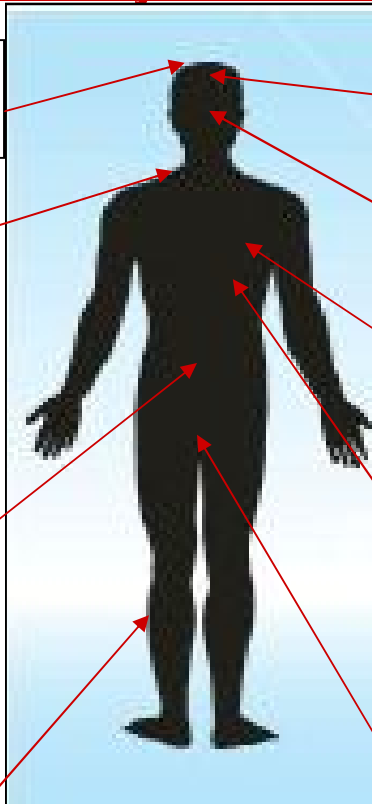
The Entire Body is Affected By Stress

HAIR: excessive hair loss and has been linked to some forms of baldness

MUSCLES: Aches and pains in the neck and shoulders, lower back pain, and various muscle twitches are all more noticeable.

DIGESTIVE TRACT: Stress can cause or aggravate diseases of the digestive tract including gastritis, stomach ulcers, and irritable colon

SKIN: Some individuals react to stress with outbreaks of skin problems such as eczema or psoriasis



BRAIN: Stress triggers mental and emotional problems like anxiety, depression, headaches, and insomnia

MOUTH: Mouth ulcers and excessive dryness

HEART: Cardiovascular disease and hypertension are linked to accumulated stress

LUNGS: High Levels of mental or emotional stress adversely affect individuals with asthmatic conditions

REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS: Stress affects the reproductive system causing recurrent infections and disorders.

Quinoa (keen-wah) Pilaf

The quinoa seed is high in protein, calcium and iron. A relatively good source of vitamin E and the B vitamins. It contains an almost perfect balance of all 8 essential amino acids needed for tissue development in humans. Quinoa can be substituted for rice or couscous in most dishes

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp Olive oil
- 2 carrots chopped
- 1 clove garlic chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 C. white wine (optional)
- 3/4 C. Chopped walnuts
- 1/4 C fresh parsley
- 2 C. Vegetable Stock
- 1 C. Quinoa (found in the gluten-free or natural)

1. Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook onion and garlic in oil for 5 minutes, or until translucent. Reduce heat and add white wine. Cook for 3 minutes or so to allow the alcohol to burn off. Add carrot, and cook 3 minutes more. Stir in quinoa and vegetable broth, and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook 15 to 20 minutes, or until quinoa is tender
2. In a bowl, toss quinoa together with walnuts and parsley. Serve hot or at room temperature.