

Stay Healthy for the Holidays



Enjoying Alcohol Responsibly

Many people enjoy raising a glass during the holidays for festive toasts and cheerful bonhomie. During the holidays, people start pouring eggnog, adult ciders, spiked punch and mulled wine.

While enjoying a drink or two can enhance social experiences and celebrations, too much can cause physical, mental and emotional problems.

UCLA Health reports that between the two weeks before Thanksgiving and New Year's, alcohol consumption spikes and, for some people, they drink double what they drink the rest of the year. UCLA warns that even short-term increases in alcohol consumption can lead to changes in blood sugar and blood pressure, changes in mood and mental health, lowered resistance to risky behaviors, increased risks of trips or falls and dangerous driving.

Mindful alcohol consumption can keep the holidays merry and bright.

PLANNING CONSUMPTION

Before attending holiday events or gatherings, decide on the amount of alcohol you plan to consume and stick to your limits. Establishing boundaries



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beforehand can help prevent excessive drinking and promote moderation.

Alternate alcoholic beverages with glasses of water to stay hydrated throughout the evening. Drinking water can help pace your alcohol intake, reduce the risk of dehydration and minimize the effects of alcohol on your body.

Enjoy a nutritious meal before consuming alcohol to slow down its absorption into your bloodstream. Eating foods rich in carbohydrates, proteins and fats can help mitigate the effects of alcohol and prevent intoxication.

CHOOSE LOW-ALCOHOL OPTIONS

Opt for lower-alcohol alternatives such as light beer, wine spritzers or cocktails made with less alcohol content. Choosing beverages with lower alcohol concentrations can help reduce overall alcohol consumption while still allowing you to enjoy the festive atmosphere.

ANTICIPATE SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Be mindful of peer pressure to drink excessively at holiday gatherings. Remember that it's OK to decline alcoholic

beverages or pace yourself according to your comfort level. Respect others' choices regarding alcohol consumption and focus on enjoying the company and festivities.

If you plan to drink alcohol at holiday events, arrange for a designated driver or alternative transportation to ensure a safe journey home. Never drink and drive, as it poses significant risks to your safety and the safety of others on the road.

If you're hosting a holiday gathering, offer a variety of non-alcoholic drink options for guests who prefer not to consume alcohol. Provide plenty of

water, sparkling water and mocktail ingredients to accommodate everyone's preferences.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Pay attention to how alcohol affects your body and mood. If you start to feel intoxicated or unwell, know when to stop drinking and switch to non-alcoholic beverages. Listen to your body's signals and prioritize your well-being.

By approaching alcohol consumption with mindfulness and moderation, you can enjoy holiday celebrations while protecting your health and well-being.



Dental Health and the Holidays

All some children may want for Christmas are their two front teeth, but most adults want to be able to be all smiles throughout the holiday season.

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Good oral hygiene and preventive dental care can help safeguard those smiles during this celebratory time.

STICK TO YOUR ROUTINE

With busy holiday schedules, it's easy to let oral hygiene habits slip. Don't let those schedules interfere with you brushing your teeth at least twice a day and flossing daily to remove plaque and food particles. Consistency is key to preventing dental issues such as cavities and gum disease.

MAKE GOOD FOOD CHOICES

Sweet treats and sugary snacks are abundant during the holidays, but they can take a toll on your teeth. Opt for tooth-friendly alternatives such as crunchy fruits and vegetables, cheese and nuts, which help stimulate saliva production and naturally clean your

teeth.

Delta Dental recommends passing on chewy treats such as taffy or caramel that can stick to tooth enamel and cause decay or even pull out fillings. They also warn against chewing on hard candy or ice cubes because it can lead to cracked or chipped teeth.

Indulging in holiday sweets and treats is part of the festive experience, but moderation is key. Enjoy your favorite treats in reasonable amounts and avoid continuous snacking throughout the day to minimize the effect on your dental health.

STAY HYDRATED

Drinking plenty of water supports overall health and dental well-being. Water helps rinse away food particles and neutralize acids in the mouth, reducing the risk of cavities and maintaining saliva production, which is crucial for oral health.

From festive cocktails to sugary soft drinks, holiday beverages can contribute to tooth decay and enamel erosion. Limit your consumption of sugary drinks. Dr. Tien Jiang, an instructor at Harvard School of Dental Medicine, warns that apple cider and cocktails can cause tooth decay. If you drink them, she says, hydrate regularly and rinse your mouth with water often.

CHEW SUGAR-FREE GUM

Chewing sugar-free gum after meals can help stimulate saliva flow and neutralize acids in the mouth. Look for gum containing xylitol, a natural sugar substitute that can help prevent cavities and promote oral health.

BE PREPARED

Keep a travel-sized toothbrush and toothpaste with you during holiday

gatherings and events. If brushing isn't possible after meals, rinse your mouth with water or chew sugar-free gum to help cleanse your teeth until you can brush properly.

Dr. Jiang points out that just like the rest of our bodies, our mouths need time to digest and rebuild naturally, so between meals, people should go for a walk, strike up a conversation or read a book.

AVOID USING TEETH AS TOOLS

Opening packages or cracking nuts with your teeth can cause chips, cracks or other damage. Use proper tools instead of your teeth to avoid dental emergencies and preserve your smile.

Follow these tips and prioritize dental health during the holidays, so you can enjoy the festive season with a healthy and confident smile.

Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

While many look forward to the delicious meals served at festive holiday gatherings, those with food allergies or dietary restrictions may feel a bit of dread.

With their hidden allergens and unfamiliar ingredients, seasonal feasts throw up unique hurdles for those with food issues. Hosts can make them feel included and welcomed by paying attention to their safety and health when planning holiday meals and celebrations. Here are some tips for accommodating special dietary needs during holiday events.

COMMUNICATE WITH GUESTS

If you're hosting a holiday gathering, communicate with your guests about their dietary restrictions and food allergies. Ask attendees to inform you of any specific dietary needs in advance so that you can plan accordingly. Consider creating a survey or RSVP form to collect information about allergies, intolerances and preferences.

If you're unsure about how to accommodate a guest's dietary needs, don't hesitate to ask for their input and guidance. Reach out to them to discuss their specific



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requirements and preferences. Be open to suggestions and willing to adjust recipes or preparation to ensure that everyone feels welcome and included.

When preparing holiday meals, label dishes that contain common allergens such as nuts, dairy, eggs, soy, wheat and shellfish. Use clear, visible labels to help guests identify which foods are safe for them to eat. Consider providing separate serving utensils for allergen-free dishes to prevent cross-contamination.

OFFER ALLERGY-FRIENDLY OPTIONS

In addition to traditional holiday fare, include

allergy-friendly options that cater to a variety of dietary needs. Offer a selection of gluten-free, dairy-free and vegan dishes to accommodate guests with different preferences and restrictions. Consider serving dishes that are naturally free from common allergens, such as roasted vegetables, fruit salads and grain-based dishes.

When shopping for ingredients and packaged foods, read labels carefully to identify potential allergens and hidden ingredients. Look for allergen warnings and check for cross-contamination risks, especially in products that are processed in facilities that handle allergens. Choose certified allergen-free products

whenever possible to minimize the risk of accidental exposure.

Focus on a few simple swaps that you can do to make recipes accessible for people with dietary restrictions. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends such things as swapping non-dairy milk for cow's milk, gluten-free grains for wheat, and chia seeds for eggs.

AVOID CROSS-CONTAMINATION

To prevent cross-contamination during meal preparation, use separate cooking equipment and utensils for allergy-friendly dishes. Clean all surfaces thoroughly and sanitize cooking tools before

preparing allergen-free foods. Designate specific areas of the kitchen for preparing and serving allergy-friendly meals to minimize the risk of cross-contact.

Take precautions to prevent cross-contact between allergen-containing foods and allergy-friendly dishes. Use separate cutting boards, knives and serving platters for allergen-free options. Avoid using shared condiments and serving utensils that may have come into contact with allergens.

By taking proactive steps to accommodate special dietary needs during holiday events, you can create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all guests.

DIY Health and Wellness Gifts

DIY gifts add a personal touch to your holiday presents and can promote wellness and self-care.

Here are some homemade gift ideas to delight your loved ones while supporting their health and wellness.

INFUSED OILS

Create custom-infused oils by combining high-quality olive oil with herbs, spices or citrus zest. Infused oils can be used for cooking, salad dressings or as a luxurious skin moisturizer. Choose ingredients like rosemary, garlic or lemon for flavorful culinary oils, or opt for soothing herbs like lavender or chamomile for aromatic massage oils.

CHILI OIL

Recipe from Healthy Green Kitchen

Ingredients

2 cups (460ml) extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons dried chili flakes

Directions

Add the chili flakes and olive oil to a pan and heat until the oil reaches 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Take off the heat and let cool completely for around 2 hours. Store in a glass bottle with an airtight seal.

HERBAL TEAS

Blend your own herbal teas using dried herbs, flowers and fruits for a comforting and nourishing beverage. Customize your tea blends based on your



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recipient's preferences and health goals. Consider combinations like calming chamomile and lavender, invigorating peppermint and ginger, or immune-boosting echinacea and elderberry.

WINTER SPICE HOLIDAY BLEND

Recipe by The Simple Green.

Ingredients

1/2 cup organic, loose leaf Earl Grey
1/4 cup organic dried currants, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons organic sliced or slivered almonds
2 teaspoons organic whole clove buds
1 medium organic orange peel, dried (see note below)

1/4 teaspoon organic fresh grated nutmeg
8 small organic cinnamon sticks

Directions

1. Prepare the dried orange peel: Using a vegetable peeler, remove a thin layer of peel from the orange and place on a cooling rack. Leave to dry at room temperature for 12 hours or until fully dry.

2. Finely chop the dried orange peel, then combine with the remaining ingredients. Store in an airtight container until ready to brew. Note: You may add the cinnamon sticks to the container or bundle and tie them to the storage container.

3. Package in a reusable glass jar with a lid and tie on a reusable tea strainer for zero-waste gifting.

NATURAL BATH PRODUCTS

Treat your loved ones to luxurious homemade bath products like bath salts, scrubs or bath bombs. Combine Epsom salt with essential oils and dried flowers for a relaxing bath soak, or create an exfoliating body scrub using sugar or sea salt infused with nourishing oils like coconut or almond.

DIY WELLNESS KITS

Curate personalized wellness kits tailored to your recipient's needs and interests. Include items like herbal teas, homemade bath products, essential oils and mindfulness journals to promote relaxation, self-care and overall well-being. If the person you are giving it to has sensory issues, include such things as stress balls, fidget toys, kinetic sand, textured noodles or sound tubes. For a winter touch, add healthy hot cocoa options such as organic hot chocolate or melatonin hot cocoa mixes (but only for adults).

You could also find some craft paper and create personalized affirmation cards for the recipient.

Self-Care During the Holidays

Holidays are complicated. They are meant to be times of joy and celebration, filled with excitement. But for many people, they are a time of stress, obligations and trauma.

Healthy holidays might start with the ability to set healthy boundaries and put self-care on the top of the to-do list. It's possible to reduce at least some holiday stress with some pre-planning and mindfulness. However, keep in mind that no amount of self-care will eliminate all stress and try not to engage in self-blame when things don't go perfectly or you aren't able to achieve all of your wellness intentions.

IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS

Reflect on your physical, emotional and mental well-being. What activities or practices nourish you and bring you joy? Whether it's spending time alone, engaging in a favorite hobby or simply resting, identify what you need to feel replenished and revitalized.

Avoid putting pressure on yourself to create the perfect holiday experience. Set realistic expectations for what you can accomplish and focus on what truly matters to you. Remember that it's OK to let go of traditions or activities that no longer serve you or bring you joy.

SET BOUNDARIES

It's OK to decline invitations or requests that don't align with your priorities or values. Saying no doesn't make you selfish; it's an essential part of self-care. Be assertive and respectful in expressing your boundaries, and don't feel guilty for prioritizing your



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well-being.

With constant access to technology, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by notifications and messages. Set boundaries around your use of technology during the holidays, such as designating specific times to check emails or social media and prioritizing in-person connections. Turn off the notifications that cause you stress.

Protect your emotional well-being by setting boundaries with toxic or draining relationships. Limit your exposure to negative influences and arrange to spend time with supportive and uplifting individuals who respect your boundaries.

SELF-CARE

Schedule regular periods of rest and relaxation throughout the holiday season. Whether it's a quiet evening at home, a leisurely walk in nature or a rejuvenating yoga session, engage in activities that help you unwind and recharge.

Listen to your body's hunger and fullness cues and practice mindful eating. Enjoy your favorite holiday foods in moderation and savor each bite mindfully, focusing on the flavors and sensations.

Don't be afraid to ask for help and delegate tasks to friends, family members or colleagues. Whether it's

preparing holiday meals, decorating the house or running errands, sharing responsibilities can lighten your load and reduce stress.

Schedule regular "me" time on your calendar. Whether it's a bubble bath, a quiet moment with a cup of tea or a creative outlet like painting or journaling, make time for activities that nourish your soul and bring you joy.

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude by focusing on the positives in your life and expressing gratitude for the blessings you have. Gratitude can help shift your perspective and foster a sense of contentment and fulfillment during the holiday season.

Keeping Furry Friends Safe

The holidays can be great fun for everyone. To make sure it is safe and healthy for the animal members of the family, a little care for their well-being needs to be incorporated into family planning.

There are a few unique risks that pets face during holiday times. These include such things as decorations that can harm pets and potentially hazardous foods or plants.

MINDFUL DECORATIONS

When decorating your home, opt for pet-friendly decorations that are safe for curious noses and paws. Avoid using tinsel, which can be harmful if ingested, and opt for pet-safe ornaments made of materials such as wood or fabric.

Secure Christmas trees to prevent them from toppling over, and consider placing breakable ornaments higher up on the tree to prevent accidental ingestion or injury. Artificial trees can be safer for pets as they don't drop needles and are less fragrant. Choose non-toxic plants and place them where your pets can't get at them and eat them.

Limit your use of edible ornaments such as candy canes, popcorn garlands or cranberry strands. Don't use



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ornaments that are covered in toxic paint.

SAFE FEASTING

Keep harmful foods out of reach of pets. Chocolate, grapes, onions and other festive treats can be toxic to animals. Remind guests not to feed table scraps to pets and store leftovers securely to prevent pets from accessing them. Consider preparing special pet-friendly treats to include in

the holiday festivities.

QUIET SPACES

Holiday gatherings can be overwhelming for pets, especially those who are sensitive to noise and crowds. Create a quiet retreat for your pet where they can relax and unwind away from the hustle and bustle of holiday celebrations. Provide comfortable bedding, toys and water in this designated space to ensure

that your pet feels safe and secure.

FIRE SAFETY

If you're using candles or a fireplace to create a cozy ambiance, take precautions to prevent burns or fires. Place candles and open flames out of reach of pets, and never leave them unattended. Use fireplace screens to prevent pets from getting too close to the flames, and ensure that all

embers are fully extinguished before leaving the room.

Cover wires with cord covers and install lights high up on the walls to keep pets from biting them.

TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

If you're traveling with your pet during the holidays, ensure their safety and comfort. Secure pets in a well-ventilated carrier or harness during car trips, and make frequent stops to allow them to stretch their legs and relieve themselves. Pack plenty of water, food and familiar toys to keep your pet comfortable during the journey.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Familiarize yourself with the location of the nearest emergency veterinary clinic in case of accidents or illness. Keep a pet first aid kit on hand, including items such as bandages, antiseptic wipes and tweezers. Program the phone number of your regular veterinarian and a local emergency veterinary clinic into your phone for easy access in case of emergencies.

By following these holiday pet safety tips, you can ensure that your furry friends enjoy a safe and happy holiday season alongside their human companions. Include them in the holiday festivities in ways that are safe and enjoyable for everyone. With a little extra care and attention, you can create cherished memories with your pets.

Healthy Skin for the Holidays

As the temperature drops and the air becomes drier, the winter months can take a toll on your skin.

From harsh winds to indoor heating, the holiday season presents unique challenges for maintaining healthy, glowing skin.

Fortunately, with the right skincare routine and habits, you can keep your skin hydrated, nourished and protected throughout the winter. Here are some essential winter tips to help you maintain a radiant complexion during the holidays.

MOISTURIZE DAILY

During the winter months, it is more important than ever to moisturize your skin regularly to prevent dryness and dehydration. Choose a rich, hydrating moisturizer formulated for your skin type and apply it liberally after cleansing.

Look for moisturizers containing ingredients like hyaluronic acid, glycerin and shea butter to lock in moisture and keep your skin soft and supple. Many brands offer organic and cruelty-free options.

USE A HUMIDIFIER

Indoor heating can strip moisture from the air, leading to dry, irritated skin. Combat dry indoor air by using a humidifier in your home, especially in rooms where you



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spend a significant amount of time. A humidifier adds moisture to the air, helping to prevent dryness and maintain optimal hydration levels for your skin.

PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM THE ELEMENTS

Cold winds and harsh weather can damage your

skin's protective barrier, leading to irritation and sensitivity. Before heading outdoors, apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher to protect your skin from harmful UV rays.

Wear protective clothing, such as hats, scarves and gloves, to shield your skin from the cold and wind.

STAY HYDRATED

Hydrated skin starts from within, so drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep your skin hydrated and healthy. Aim to drink at least eight glasses of water daily, and limit your intake of dehydrating beverages like alcohol and caffeine, which can contribute to dry skin.

EXFOLIATE WEEKLY

Exfoliation helps to remove dead skin cells and promote cell turnover, revealing fresh, radiant skin underneath. Incorporate a gentle exfoliating scrub into your skincare routine once or twice a week to slough away dry, flaky skin and improve overall texture and tone. Avoid harsh exfoliants that can strip the skin and cause irritation, especially during the winter months.

PROTECT YOUR LIPS

The delicate skin on your lips is particularly susceptible to dryness and chapping during the winter. Keep your lips hydrated and nourished by applying a moisturizing lip balm with SPF throughout the day. Look for lip balms containing ingredients like beeswax, shea butter and coconut oil to soothe and protect your lips from the elements.

CHOOSE GENTLE CLEANSERS

Opt for gentle, hydrating cleansers that won't strip your skin of its natural oils. Avoid harsh, foaming cleansers and opt for cream-based or oil-based cleansers that effectively cleanse the skin without causing dryness or irritation.

Cleansing your skin too frequently or with hot water can exacerbate dryness, so aim to wash your face no more than twice a day with lukewarm water.