

Keeping fit through the holidays likely requires careful planning

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For best results, alternate booze with non-alcoholic drinks, such as juice or water, said Ms Hasselfeldt.

When it comes to holiday cooking, the chef is in charge. So turn high fat treats into tasty low fat ones by reducing sugar and using low fat creams, cream-cheeses and milk.

A ton of fat calories are lurking in salad dressings, so keep the greens healthy by sticking to low-fat topping.

And when attending a pot luck party, be sure to bring a healthful option, such as a

veggie or fruit plate, to offset the rich goodies on display.

Partying all night long can lead to some serious wee hour munchies. But the metabolism slows in the evening, meaning late night noshing isn't a good idea.

If midnight snacking is necessary, make the portions both small and low in fat.

Keeping activity levels up is another way to enjoy the holidays without carrying reminders of them around the waistline into the new year.

When hosting a party, make dancing part of the evening's fun.

And schedule outdoor activities such as ice skating and tobogganing into family dinners.

Shaking up the usual exercise routines can be a fun way to stay active through the holidays.

For example, indoor exercisers can ski, skate, snow-shoe or toboggan over Christmas, while outdoor exercisers can venture in for swimming, weight training or cardio classes, explained Ms Hasselfeldt.

"Take advantage of community resources," she said, such as the free family skates offered at one of Milton's two arenas from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. December 23 and January 6. Free family skates are also available from 10:30 a.m. until noon January 2 and 4.

The ice time is donated by the Town, and the admission cost by Tim Hortons.

And a kids' day camp is also offered by the Town December 27 to January 5, with the exception of New Year's Day.

For more information on free skates, day camps and extra holiday swims, call the Milton Leisure Centre or Town Hall.

Keeping fit through the holidays can take careful planning when shopping, parties and family gatherings all vie for time.

So keep exercise aims realistic.

"Set your goals, small, little goals, but attainable," said Ms Hasselfeldt. "Decide to walk at least twice a week for 20 minutes."

Even someone who usually exercises between three and six times a week can go down to one or two times a week with little impact for a short while.

"You'd have to not be working out all for a couple of weeks to notice a difference," said Ms Hasselfeldt.

"But if someone goes down to just one or two times a week, it won't take them as long to recover."

Let's talk about all relationships

Throughout our lives, we will play a role in a large number of relationships.

Health Notes

Often when we hear the word relationships we

think of relationships of a sexual nature. In fact, what we should really be thinking of is the relationship we have with everyone from friends to parents to teachers to brothers or sisters to girlfriends or boyfriends.

In all of the above, it's important you are the best you can be. You have the right to live in a world free from dangers or harm. You must remember you are a special person and you need to believe in yourself. You need to learn communication and decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Remember, work toward being the best you can be.

Next, once you are the best you can be, it's important to hang out with a really special 'them'. This means the people you choose to hang out with must never make you feel unsafe by putting you down or hurting you. They should always treat you with respect and support and kindness and listen to your point of view even if they don't agree with it.

Remember, they need to treat you with respect.

So when considering a relationship with someone, any healthy relationship should have the following:

- Respect
- Honesty
- Earned trust
- You should feel you can share your opinion, and let them share theirs
- Each person should feel good about himself or herself
- You can do things together and apart
- Open communication — sharing and listening by both parties
- Equality
- Regular acts of kindness, caring and support
- Feeling safe - physically, sexually and emotionally
- Respecting each other's differences in values, beliefs and cultures

All relationships are a lot of work and take constant effort to make sure that both people in the relationship are happy.

If a relationship doesn't feel good most of the time maybe we need to take the opportunity to talk about the relationship with someone who can give us support in making food decisions about that relationship. Keep in touch with family and friends and seek support if you have any questions.

Health Notes is prepared by staff of the Halton Region Health Department.

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Weight Management & Nutrition Centres

MARION HEALY
Registered Nutritional Consulting Practitioner

Q: How do I get rid of my pot belly?

A: 1. Chew your food slowly: essential stages of digestion take place when you chew, and if you rush this important step, it will not occur later in the digestive tract.

2. Drink 8-10 glasses of water every day: it is crucial that your body is well hydrated so that it can add necessary liquid to food as it passes through the gastrointestinal tract. Caffeinated or alcoholic beverages don't count, as they actually dehydrate the body more.

3. Do not consume iced liquids or ice foods; they cause digestion to slow down, and lower the temperature of the digestive tract so that enzymes are unable to function.

4. Eat in a calm environment: when you're stressed out, your digestion is one of the first systems to be slowed down so that more oxygen will get to the brain.

5. Keep up your exercise: your digestive system depends on the force of gravity to help propel food through it. Going for a short walk after lunch and dinner is a great way to ensure things are moving well, and it's a great stress reliever too!

6. Eat only until you are full: your stomach can handle about what you can hold in your two hands cupped together, so try not to eat more than this at one sitting. It takes about 20 mins. for the message to reach the brain, so eat slowly and wait a few minutes before having a second helping!

7. Eat your veggies: raw vegetables contain enzymes which aid in the digestion of other foods. Eating a salad at the start of dinner can give you a head start on breaking down the protein you eat later.

8. Watch food combinations: certain foods become more difficult to digest when paired with certain other foods. Some difficult to digest combinations include legumes and meat, fruit and protein, different types of animal proteins (eg. seafood and beef, chicken and pork), citrus fruits and grains.

9. Only eat when you are hungry: your system won't produce the digestive juices necessary to break down food. Wait until a meal is out of your stomach (1-2 hours depending on the complexity of the meal) before eating more. You will also be more primed to digest food if it is appetizing.

10. Keep digestive enzyme supplements handy. Whenever you can, avoid eating too much or too rich food, or your digestive system is under stress. Supplements can help to compensate by providing extra digestive enzymes and other supplements that your body may not be producing enough of. These supplements are available at our clinic.

Marion Healy is a registered Nutritional Consulting Practitioner with over 13 years experience in weight loss and nutrition. She is Clinic Director of Beverly Hills Weight Management and Nutrition Centre in Milton & Clarkson Village, Mississauga. For more information contact Marion at 875-2889

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