



Ask Wellness: Fit and Fat?

Question: *I recently learned that my body mass index (BMI) is 27 and puts me in the “overweight” category. I have been exercising regularly (at least 5 days per week) for over 6 months. My friend says I should lose the weight first and then exercise. What should I do?*

Answer: A significant amount of research has been conducted on the topic of “fit and fat,” primarily by Dr. Steven Blair of the University of South Carolina. Dr. Blair has consistently found that health outcomes and mortality are more closely tied to fitness rather than BMI. His research has found that especially among older adults (60 years and above) health outcomes are better for overweight individuals who are physically active than adults who have a healthy BMI but are sedentary. This means that regardless of weight, you can reduce your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and even cancer by engaging in at least 30 minutes of moderate activity exercise most days of the week. This should also carry a warning for people who are a “healthy weight” but aren’t exercising regularly. Being “thin” doesn’t necessarily mean being “healthy” – start exercising!

Depression and the Holidays

As the holidays approach each year, more and more people suffer from Holiday Depression. Some experts blame it on factors relating to nutrition. Nutritional experts believe that depression is caused by the excessive sugar and fatty foods coursing through our bodies. Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents (depression-guide.com) said they have suffered from depression during the holidays, often to such an extent that they do not take part in the season's activities. Depression and suicides generally occur at a higher ratio during the holidays than at any other time of the year.

Causes of holiday depression:

Sadness is a truly personal feeling. What makes one person feel sad may not affect another person. Typical sources of holiday sadness include: stress, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial stress, and the inability to be with one's family and friends. Balancing the demands of shopping, parties, family obligations, and house guests may contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed and increased tension. People who do not view themselves as depressed may develop stress responses, such as: headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating, and difficulty sleeping. Others may experience post-holiday sadness after New Year's/January 1st. This can result from built-up expectations, disappointments from the previous year, coupled with stress and fatigue.

Action Strategies: Holidays and Depression --*continued on page 2*

Back Pain? Yoga and Stretching Provide Relief

Chronic back pain plagues millions of Americans and treatment can be difficult and expensive. Each year Americans spend about \$50 billion on treatments for back pain, but most lack long term effectiveness. A [study](#) published last month in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* found that more than 50% of subjects who took a 75 minute yoga class each week or participated in a 20 minute at-home stretching program experienced significant pain relief after 12 weeks. This is excellent news for anyone experiencing back pain. For a list of total body stretches that promote back health, please click [here](#). If you're interested in yoga, join us on November 7th for a 45 minute introductory class.

What's Cooking in Wellness: Thanksgiving Sweet Potatoes (Wellness Style)

My mother's Sweet Potato Casserole is more dessert than side dish. With 3 cups of sugar (not to mention the corn syrup), it's more sugar than vegetable. But I can't imagine Thanksgiving without a sweet potato dish. Try a lighter version of the Sweet Potato Side Dish and eliminate most of the sugar but still keep the sweetness. Ingredients: 1.5 pounds sweet potatoes, washed, baked; 2 medium bananas, peeled and halved; 2 TB orange juice; ½ TSP ground cinnamon; ¼ TSP ground cardamom; ¼ TSP ground nutmeg; red pepper flakes to taste; 3 TB brown sugar. Prepare: Lightly coat baking dish with cooking spray; After sweet potatoes are baked, peel and set aside; Place banana halves in baking dish, bake (375) uncovered until soft and juicy (~15min), remove from oven and pour juice over bananas, mix well; in large mixing bowl add bananas, sweet potatoes, spices and brown sugar, mix until smooth. Bake at 375 until warmed through. Serves 6.

November Happiness Tip: Thanks!

We all say “thank you,” but sometimes the words just aren't enough. Once a week write a thank you note to someone. It could be a coworker, friend, family member, a member of our armed forces serving overseas or a complete stranger. By being mindful in our gratitude, you reap the benefits, whether you send the thank you note or not.

Depression and the Holidays continued---

I have some suggestions for the depressive's holiday, drawn from my experience. By the way, these are also good for the non-depressive who's totally stressed out and at the end of his/her rope.

First and foremost, if you suffer from loneliness or holiday depression, do not be alone for the holidays! Even if it means volunteering your time to help the needy at a food line or soup kitchen, do not be alone. There are many valuable programs to become involved with well before the holidays, and such involvement on your part will lessen your feelings of loneliness, of low self-esteem and low self-worth.

A second option might be attending holiday celebrations, such as candlelight church services that serve to warm the heart, or gala musical concertos that fill our spirits with the beauty and fulfillment of song. This also helps those depressed to feel less sorry and encourages a light heart when those in the depressed person's environment are happy and involved in the church or musical service.

Keep in mind that taking care of oneself is a gift to everyone else because everyone ends up having a happier and healthier holiday.

Instead of making yourself go through the ordeal of sending out paper Christmas cards, send electronic ones instead. Amazon have a good selection of free holiday e-cards.

If you must send out cards, just sign them instead of racking your brain trying to come up with something cheerful.

If the usual Christmas music is really grating on your nerves, try different music, like classical or choral renditions of carols.

Not being able to do what they used to do in years past can be difficult to handle as an elder may be "stuck" on looking at what they used to do during the holiday season. It can be hard to cope with the reality that a six course dinner for twelve isn't feasible anymore.

Define your personal limits and then stick to them. Decide for yourself how much you want to participate in activities, entertain guests, visit with relatives, or travel during the holidays. There is no one correct way to enjoy the season, so lose the guilt about choosing your own schedule. You'll feel more in charge of your own life, and less likely to feel stressed or depressed.

Scale back on your decorating. Don't wrap the house and bushes in lights. Put the wreath on the door, and you've taken care of the decorating for the outside of the house. Decorating a Christmas tree is a monumental task, especially if you get a live tree. Consider scrapping it for this year, or just having a mini tree.

People forget about exercise around the holidays. In most parts of the world, the weather is cold and the sky is dark. Make sure you are exercising daily and sending more oxygen to your brain cells. The result of exercise will improve your health as well as your attitude.


My Mother always says, "if you can't say anything nice about others, don't say anything at all." However, when you find yourself in a conversation and a relative says, "Remember Uncle Phil?" " He was an alcoholic"
Respond with " yes, Uncle Phil was an alcoholic and he was the most charitable person, I have ever met."
Connect your friend's negative statement about Phil with a positive one.

If you can afford to, arrange to take a vacation during Christmas. Go somewhere tropical or where Christmas isn't celebrated, and just avoid the whole thing. You can use the excuse of getting ready for your vacation as a way to avoid social commitments.

Try to stay away from the alcohol that's flowing freely this time of year. Very simply, alcohol is a depressant. It's the last thing you need. It may relieve the pain for a little while, but you'll probably end up feeling sad and maudlin.

Recommended Reading

- *Robinson, Jo and Staeheli, Jean Coppock, Unplug the Christmas Machine: A Complete Guide to Putting Love and Joy Back into the Season.*



Listed below are the top ten voted #1 treats for Halloween. Helping your children's seasonal candy treats disappear can help their "sugar-tude" (*that's what I call an attitude prompted by an overload of carbs!*) But, do you know what an extra load you are putting on your diet?

To get your 5 Newsletter Bonus Points this month, tally the calories in these items and send your results to Rachel in an email. And don't forget to total the list--- Rachel will award points based on whether or not your total is within 25 calories (either 25 lower or higher) than the actual total.

TOP TEN HALLOWEEN CANDIES:		
VARIETY:	AMOUNT:	CALORIES:
1. Snickers	1 MINI BAR	
2. Nerds	1 MINI 10G BOX	
3. Tootsie Roll	1 40G SERVING	
4. Life Savers	1 LIFE SAVER	
5. M&M's	ABOUT 10 PIECES	
6. Reese's	1 40G REESE'S'S CUP	
7. Twizzlers	1 28G PACKAGE	
8. Butterfinger	1 MINI BITE SIZE	
9. Skittles	1 "Fun Size" Pack	
10. Candy Corn	4 pieces	
	TOTAL:	