

HOW TO REACH US

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SIMPLIFY YOUR HOLIDAYS

By Mary C. Morris, LSW, MEd., CCM
Oncology Social Worker

Holidays are particularly stressful times under normal circumstances. When a cancer related diagnosis is added to the preparations and festivities, the results can be disastrous. We all have our own expectations for what the holidays should be. We all get caught up in keeping family rituals and traditions. It is important to use your health care team for advice to get you through. Your dietician may be able to provide ideas for maintaining adequate nutrition and dealing with food-related side effects of chemotherapy. The nursing staff is available to help with concerns relating to fatigue and medication side effects. Your pharmacist may give some insight into the best way to arrange taking medications. The Social Worker will help with relaxation and stress management.

Simplify-family and friends will not fault you for making changes in your approach to the holidays. Gift certificates for goods and services cut down on the amount of time you are dealing with crowds. While traditions are hard to break, or change, consider starting some new ones, or abandoning those that made you "crazy" anyway. If caregiving, and/or fatigue, is wearing you down, don't stand in the kitchen. Consider changing your menu, or better still have friends and family contribute dishes for the holiday table. Stand back and do what is important to you and your loved ones not what you think is expected.



CONTROLLING YOUR WEIGHT

By Shelly Watson, RD, LD, CDE

Maintaining a healthy weight can help lower your risk of getting heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. The following tips may be helpful whether you want to lose weight or maintain your current weight through the holiday season and the New Year.

LEARN ABOUT GOOD FOOD CHOICES:

- ◆ Seek out reliable information on low fat, low calorie, nutritious foods and avoid foods that are high in calories and low in nutrients
- ◆ Change your cooking methods and recipes to low fat

LIMIT PORTION SIZES:

- ◆ Consider measuring foods to help limit serving sizes
- ◆ Put food directly onto the dinner plate, instead of using serving bowls
- ◆ Use smaller plates so portions appear larger

SET THE SCENE:

- ◆ Eat meals at the table and do not do anything else while eating
- ◆ Don't eat absentmindedly. Make a conscious decision to eat

SLOW DOWN:

- ◆ Put your fork down after each bite and do not pick it up again until the food is swallowed
- ◆ Try to be the last one to finish the meal

BECOME A PLANNER:

- ◆ Plan meals in advance
- ◆ Grocery shop with a list, when you are not hungry
- ◆ Keep problem foods out of the house most of the time. Save them for occasional use and routinely substitute lower calorie nutritious options
- ◆ Think about social gatherings in advance and have a plan to help you be in control. Avoid long periods of deprivation prior to parties or restaurants
- ◆ Alternate or substitute alcohol and high calorie drinks with low calorie drinks
- ◆ Consider bringing your own low cal snacks and beverages
- ◆ When under social pressure to eat assert your right not to eat, or if you wish to eat do so sparingly

DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE DEPRIVED:

- ◆ Eat at least three (3) well balanced meals per day
- ◆ Get plenty of rest and avoid fatigue
- ◆ Reduce, don't totally eliminate, favorite foods. Moderation is the key to success even with high calorie foods

EXERCISE ON A REGULAR BASIS:

- ◆ Choose an aerobic exercise that you enjoy, such as walking, and gradually work up to 30-45 minutes at least three (3) times per week
- ◆ Incorporate more exercise into your day. Take the stairs, park your car further away, etc.

SET REALISTIC GOALS

- ◆ A one-two pound loss per week is a good weight loss
- ◆ Set a goal weight that is attainable. You don't have to be skinny
- ◆ Don't let setbacks sabotage your weight loss or maintenance efforts. Focus on the long term result

REWARD YOURSELF FOR YOUR EFFORTS:

- ◆ Make an agreement with yourself that you will reward yourself for your efforts to change your eating habits with something meaningful other than food.

RECIPES

SPINACH DIP

This is a low calorie version of a favorite hors d'oeuvre. It looks impressive if you hollow a round loaf of bread and fill it with the dip. Cube the bread that you remove and use it to spread the dip on.

- 1 pkg. (10oz.) frozen chopped spinach
- 1/4 package (2 Tbl.) dry vegetable soup mix
- 1 3/4 cups plain nonfat yogurt
- 1/4 cup reduced calorie mayonnaise
- 1 can (8 oz.) water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- 2 Tbl. chopped green onion
- 1/4 tsp. dry mustard

Thaw spinach, drain and squeeze until dry. Stir dry soup before measuring to mix evenly. Mix all ingredients. Chill and serve with raw vegetables or slices of French or sour dough bread.

Yield: about 3 1/2 cups (14 servings)
One serving: 1/4 cup
Calories per serving: 40
Exchanges: 1 vegetable



MARINATED VEGETABLES

You'll find this a good substitute for a salad. This recipe can be prepared in advance and refrigerated for several days.

- 4 cups water
- 4 cups vegetables, cut into bite size pieces, such as broccoli, celery, green pepper, carrots, mushrooms, cauliflower, green beans, frozen or fresh brussel sprouts
- 1/4 cup low calorie Italian dressing

Bring water to a boil. Add vegetables and return to a boil. Drain immediately. Mix vegetables with Italian dressing and marinate in refrigerator for one hour or until chilled. Drain before serving.

Yield: about 4 cups (8 servings)

One serving: 1/2 cup

Calories per serving: 25

Exchanges: 1 vegetable

Quick & Healthy Meals

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TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

By Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, OCN, CHES, CPDS, HNC

The holidays are a joyous occasion and a chance to come together with friends and family. Taking care of yourself during a stressful holiday season is one of the best things you can do for yourself and those around you. Here are some tips that can get you off in the right direction.

- ◆ Try to set realistic goals for the holidays. Keep expectations simple for yourself and others.
- ◆ Make a budget and stick to it. Financial worries add to the stress. Don't try to keep up with everyone else. Spend what you can afford. Seek out free activities.
- ◆ Try not to overeat or drink excessively to escape stressful feelings. Eat healthy foods and get plenty of exercise.
- ◆ Remember that the holidays are more than one day; they are a part of a whole season. Pace yourself. Spread enjoyable activities throughout the entire season.
- ◆ Try a new way of celebrating. Attend a celebration of another faith or community or give the gift of your time to someone else.
- ◆ Helping others can also help you feel better. Volunteer at a homeless shelter, buy a present for a child in need or visit people in nursing homes.

- ◆ If you do not have friends and family to visit with, reach out. Contact local clubs, religious groups or community centers to see if they are holding activities that may interest you.
- ◆ Recognize that everyone responds to holidays differently. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is you are feeling. Nuture yourself! Take some time out of each day to care for and celebrate yourself.
- ◆ Respect and validate others' thoughts and feelings.
- ◆ Try to stay in the present. Look forward to the future. Life is full of changes. Consider what is important in your life and good about these times.

Happy Holidays!



ARE YOUR HOLIDAYS SINGING THE BLUES?

By Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, OCN, CHES, CPDS, HNC

For many families and individuals, this time of the year can be difficult. Instead of feeling joy, many people may experience the “holiday Blues” and not feel like celebrating. Most times these, “blues” pass with the season. Sometimes these profound feelings of sadness or depression do not go away over time.

Symptoms of depression include:

- ◆ Persistent sad, anxious or empty mood
- ◆ Sleeping too much or too little, middle of the night or early morning waking
- ◆ Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased appetite and weight gain
- ◆ Loss of interest or please in activities, including sex
- ◆ Irritability or restlessness
- ◆ Difficulty thinking, concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- ◆ Fatigue or loss of energy
- ◆ Thoughts of death or suicide
- ◆ Feeling inappropriate guilt, hopelessness or worthlessness

If you are experiencing these symptoms over a period of several weeks, you may be depressed. Talking to your doctor or a health care professional can be helpful. Seeking help is the first step to solving any problem. Your health care team is here for you. Call us if we can help!



EAT 5 A DAY FOR BETTER HEALTH

By Deborah M. Dashko, RN, BA, LPC, OCN, CHES, CPDS, HNC

The link between eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and decreasing the risk of disease is well established. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that, in America, at least 300,000 deaths each year are associated with poor nutrition and lack of physical activity. According to the CDC, improving dietary habits to include more fruits and vegetables could reduce the incidence of some chronic diseases. The good news is that fruit and vegetable consumption has gone up in the United States. Yet, the most recent estimates show that consumption of fruits and vegetables is declining among African-American men. Data show that African-American men ages 35 to 50 eat only 3.5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, approximately one-third of the 9 servings recommended for men by national health authorities. Moreover, only 14 percent of African-Americans are even aware of the 5 A Day recommendation to consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables everyday.

Because African-American men experience a disproportionate burden of diet-related chronic diseases, The National 5 A day For Better Health Program is launching a campaign to encourage black men to eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables an day.

With this in mind, you might want to make a lifestyle change and include more fruits and vegetables into your diet! Remember that African-American men are 1.5 times more likely to die from cancer than white men. Including at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day is important for everyone no matter race, religion or creed. Research suggests that diets rich in cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts) and lycopene-rich foods (tomato sauce and tomato products) may reduce the risk for prostate cancer. Think about it and make the change today!