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Our Mission

Texas OPTI is an educational consortium committed to assuring the advancement of osteopathic postdoctoral training.

In fulfillment of that commitment we enhance osteopathic graduate medical education through quality program development and advocacy on behalf of our interns, residents, fellows and member institutions.

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How to Keep Holidays Happy and Healthy

By Miranda Hitti, WebMD Feature—Reviewed by Louise Chang, M.D.

The parties, the sweets, alcohol, missed workouts, late nights, mall-crawling, small talk, family issues, breathing air on crowded planes — ah, it's the holidays. The experts say you need to get in training and be mindful to stay healthy and stress-free.

Diet, exercise, mind and spirit are key," says Laurie Steelsmith, N.D. "You need to build up to this time of indulgence. We need to remember what this is all about: connecting with loved ones," Steelsmith said.

Even if you are foraging in a relative's kitchen and not doing the shopping, a healthy diet consists of five fruits or veggies a day, complex whole-grain carbs, and adequate protein. Surely you can grab an apple or banana and slap together a whole-grain, lean turkey sandwich instead of chowing down on cold ham fat and cookies.

Larrian Gillespie, M.D. tells WebMD that fiber is very important when eating richer meals than usual. "Nuts are a good source of fiber," she explains. "Sprinkle them over your food. They make you feel fuller. Gillespie also suggests switching your biggest intake to mid-day. This gives you more time to work off the calories.

Hot fluids, Steelsmith says, like soup or tea can also thin out mucus secretions that can trap bacteria and viruses. She also suggests eating plenty of garlic, which has strong antiviral, antibacterial, and immune-stimulating properties. Rubbing on hand sanitizer before a meal can stave off the unfamiliar germs.

Gillespie recommends liberal consumption of the holiday staple, cranberries, to stave off possible digestive distress from copious amounts of turkey and chicken, which can sometimes be cooked inadequately.

Steelsmith also advises packing a one-a-day multivitamin and drinking a lot of filtered or bottled water as you go through your day, even on shopping forays. Heat in a sauna with plenty of sweating, helps detoxify. Or even taking a cold shower. Her prescription is to let the hot water run down your spine for a count of 10, then cold for a count of five, then hot for a count of 10, for three cycles. "End with the cold," she says. "This is great for energizing."

Before a party, of course, plan to eat and drink sensibly.

- Drink water beforehand. Alternate sparkling water with an alcohol drink, if you wish to drink.
- Fill a plate and don't hover (or should that be Hoover?) over the buffet.
- When you load a plate, aim for 2-3 bites of each food that appeals to you. Better to eat something in moderation than yearn for it later and maybe overindulge.
- You can also put some calories in the bank before a party. Eat lightly at all other meals of the day, but do not

starve yourself all day. That can lead to that “buffet-hoovering” syndrome.

Fabio Comano, a certified trainer at the American Council of Exercise recommends plunging in and getting in shape now, knowing that the holidays will bring a few pounds. “Most people tend to put on weight in winter,” he tells WebMD. It’s part of our (biological) survival pattern, a little like animals packing it on for hibernation.”

Comano thinks the holidays are stressful enough without loading yourself down with unrealistic exercise goals. “If you exercise 45 minutes a day, you may only be able to do 30 minutes,” he says. Start the day with deep breathing. Take a walk before a meal, then one after. If you bake cookies as gifts, walk them around to the neighbors’ houses. If you normally exercise in the morning, stick to your schedule. Buddy up with a family member; walking is a good time to catch up.

Tips for Calming Holiday Emotions

You need to get sufficient sleep during the holidays,” Steelsmith says. This is part of a “lifestyle tune-up” she recommends. The No. 1 priority in such a tune-up is to see if you are spending your time on the things you value most. Stress goes up if you do things you don’t value. Write down what things are most important to you — family, care giving, work, status, whatever it is — and pursue those most important.

If you are overcommitted, say no. Don’t feel guilty. The person who asked probably didn’t want to do it either.

If the holidays are a time of religious observation for you, leave plenty of time for that.

If there are children around, remember how they love this time of year and look forward to it. Make sure they get sufficient rest and get to help with the wrapping, shopping, decorating, and cooking, even if they make these projects take longer.

The ACE recommends against unrealistic expectations. Don’t expect to throw the perfect party or find the perfect gift for everyone. Somewhere, at almost every moment, a dog is eating a dropped turkey. It’s part of life.

To get in touch with the “new you”, take 15 minutes to be alone each day. Do some stretching. Read. Or, just focus on what is around you with every sense. Do you hear tinkling bells? Smell gingerbread and pine? See sparkling lights? Feel the soft cheek of a napping child curled up next to you? Taste a sip of mulled cider or a dab of eggnog on your tongue? See? The holidays are not all scheduling, stress, sore feet, arguing and obligation!

Save the Date

*2009 Annual Clinical Assembly of
Osteopathic Surgeons*
Chicago, Illinois
October 31st–November 3rd

*AOA/ACOF 114th Annual
Convention & Scientific Seminar*
New Orleans, Louisiana
November 1st–5th

OMM Facilitator Training
UNTHSC Campus
November 6th

OMM Resident Training
UNTHSC Campus
November 7th



Kudos to Dr. Rich Donaldson!

Richard John Donaldson, D.O. (second year family medicine resident at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston) had his article, *‘Integrative and Osteopathic Medicine’* published in the September 2009 edition of the Houston Medical Journal. Congratulations, Rich! We are proud of you!

You may read his article by accessing the **UTMB Family Medicine Residency Blog** at this address: <http://utmbfmr.blogspot.com>. Enjoy!

Visit the Texas OPTI website...

...for a variety of helpful resources: <http://texasopti.hsc.unt.edu>.

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