



Eat, Drink and be Healthy at Christmas



At Christmas we're always surrounded by lots of lovely food and drink. Whilst there is no reason to feel guilty about enjoying yourself, it's worth remembering that, on average, people gain about 5lbs (2kg) over Christmas.

Now you know why Santa is such a jolly fellow! But don't despair. Christmas doesn't have to be about over-indulgence and 'unhealthy' food.

Christmas Day

Did you know that people eat their way through about 6,000 calories on Christmas day? That's about three times as much as we need.

So, follow these simple tips to help you eat, drink and be healthy:

- For starters try melon or smoked salmon. Salmon is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, needed to keep your heart healthy. You could also have a hearty vegetable soup as a starter.
- Turkey is low in fat and high in protein so tuck in - but don't eat the skin or you'll add lots more fat and calories.
- Roast potatoes using pure vegetable oil, olive oil or sunflower oil rather than lard - and cut them into large chunks, as these absorb less fat than small ones.
- Fill up on vegetables. Brussels sprouts, peas and carrots all contain antioxidants - substances which may help protect against heart disease and cancer. And as long as they are not covered in butter or any other fatty spreads they are all low in calories and fat and contribute to the five portions of fruit and vegetables you need every day.
- When making gravy, let the fat from the turkey juices rise to the surface, then skim it off and use what's left behind.
- It's usually all the little extras that pile on the calories - try and grill your sausages and bacon, use a fruit based stuffing and make bread sauce with low fat milk.
- Christmas pudding is quite low in fat, so to keep it this



way; serve with low fat custard or crème fraiche.

You could also prepare a fresh fruit salad and serve with natural yoghurt.

- While a couple of glasses of red wine may be good for your heart, too much won't help you feel at your best. Why not alternate your alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic ones, or even better, offer to drive and stick to non-alcoholic options all night.

Snacks

With all the tasty snacks around at Christmas it's easy to over-indulge. Just a single mince pie contains about 250 calories! So, if you can, keep tempting treats out of sight and make sure you have healthy options to hand:

- Satsumas are a great source of vitamin C, so keep a large bowl of these and other fruit close by.
- Chestnuts are the only low fat nuts around, so roast a few and leave the salted peanuts to one side.
- Choose reduced fat crisps, plain popcorn or pretzels or raw veg and low fat dips.
- Dried fruit makes a tasty snack - dates, figs and apricots are all good choices.

Above all enjoy yourself - and don't forget that being active will help you work off those extra calories. Why not dance the night away at all those office parties and on Christmas day, wrap up warm and go for a walk after lunch.

Further Information

For accurate and balanced information on nutrition have a look at our fantastic interactive websites at www.bdaweightwise.com and www.teenweightwise.com. Both of these websites have been specially created by dietitians with a grant from the Department of Health. These websites are packed full of information, practical advice and support for anyone who is managing their weight or wants to know about eating a healthier diet. All the information is independent, scientifically sound, and trustworthy! And what's more - it's all free!

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