



December Healthful Tips from Barix Clinics

Share your workout time with visiting relatives. See what activities you can share and be active together. Check into visitor passes to your local Curves or fitness center.

Gather around the fire to enjoy sugar free hot cocoa (make it with skim milk rather than water for a protein boost) and share holiday memories.

Offer more vegetable side dishes at holiday meals.

Set out bite-sized snacks like nuts, popcorn, low sugar trail mix or pretzels in brandy snifters. Guests will have to pick up the glass and pour a few in their hand rather than mindlessly reaching for snacks.

Keep in mind that the purpose of holiday gatherings is to celebrate—not to eat. Focus on connecting with friends and family, not food.

Create a holiday tradition of walking around the neighborhood after dinner to look at holiday lights.

Use holiday time to create quality family time. Turn off the TV and play with the kids.

Keep portions small by using a small plate and limiting the number of trips made to the buffet table.

Take your favorite healthful holiday food to parties so that you feel like you are getting a treat. How about shrimp cocktail or hummus, ham rolls or low fat layered bean dip and baked chips?

Put fitness items on your holiday wish list—new walking shoes, a new warm-up outfit, a pedometer, an exercise class, a treadmill, a CD player, an exercise DVD, or a book on CD to listen to as you walk away the miles.

Start a group at work and focus on maintaining the same weight though the holiday season by setting walking goals.

Exercise boosts energy and who doesn't need a little extra through the hustle and bustle of the season?

Put on your favorite holiday tunes and dance along. What a great way to get your "feel good" brain chemistry in high gear.

Make sleep a priority. Most adults need 7–9 hours each night. Missing out on sleep sets you up for carbohydrate cravings and weight gain. What a good reason to head to bed on time.

Grab the kids away from the computer, TV and video games and head out to cross country ski, hike on nearby trails or try out snowshoes. Start some new active family traditions.

Enjoy the lighter side of life with family and friends—laughing heartily is good for the heart as well as the spirit.

Make some time for yourself every day—even 15 minutes away from distractions to refresh—listen to soothing music or take several deep breaths throughout the day to clear your mind.

Take a walk at night to stargaze.

Be realistic about what to expect from the holidays. Realize that some traditions will no longer work as well as families grow and change. Holidays often trigger stress and depression. Take time to take care of your physical and mental health this season.

Wishing you a very blessed holiday season,

Barix Clinics