



**WELLNESS NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2023**

Powered by:



HIGHLIGHTS for the [December 2023 Newsletter](#)

Holiday Screen Time: The Curious Reason to Cut Back

It's Hallmark-movie and holiday-special season on TV and all your favorite streaming services. But if you spend too much time sitting in front of a screen, it could make the holidays a little less merry and bright. Here's what you need to know...

Deck the Halls with Avocados: A Gift for the Heart

Looking for a healthier way to deck the halls during the holidays without loading up on cookies, cakes, and pies? Eat more avocados. Check out the health benefits of this nutrient-dense fruit (yes, it's a fruit).

Hustle & Bustle: 4 Ways to Stay Active During the Holidays

Too busy to exercise during the holidays? It's no secret the holiday schedule gets packed with a lot of activities and things to do. But you can still make time to be active. Check out these fast and easy ways to workout anywhere.

Y-Axis: No Snooze, You Lose

Think you can skimp on sleep for days without any negative effects? Think again. If you're trying to manage your weight, here's a big reason to make sure you get your Zzzs.

Recipe: Potato Soup

Warm up a cold winter night with this easy-to-make soup. It's packed with healthy veggies with a creamy texture you'll love. Yum!

Take the December Health Challenge!

Connect With Others: Make time to build social bonds

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: What can I do to prevent holiday weight gain?



WORKPLACE WELLNESS
MEMBERSHIP

NEWSLETTER

Powered by:





THE Y AXIS



No Snooze, You Lose.

Did you know lack of sleep is linked to overeating? It's a recipe for weight gain and tight-fitting pants. Not exactly the kind of thing that puts a smile on your face during the holidays. Right?



If you think you're tipping the scale in the wrong direction, your sleep habits may be to blame. A recent study found that people who don't get enough sleep are more likely to overeat (7 to 8 hours is best).⁴

After a sleepless night, the average person munched their way through an extra 385 calories the next day. No snooze, you lose. Get your Zzzs.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

evan@thehealthycopywriter.com

Holiday Screen Time: The Curious Reason to Cut Back

Cut back on screen time to protect your health

Are those holiday movies luring you to the couch? Or maybe you're using a tablet or smartphone to shop for last-minute gifts, consume social media, and binge on holiday classics.

A little screen time is fine. But there are better ways to enjoy the holidays than parked in front of a screen. Right?

If you're like most adults, you spend 10-plus hours a day in front of screens. And that's a problem. A recent study found that too much screen time increases the risk for serious health problems and early death.¹

The trouble with too much screen time

In the study, researchers followed 221,000 people for 15 years. They found that the more time people spent in front of screens, the more likely they were to die from:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Influenza
- Parkinson's disease
- Liver disease

Experience the holidays with less screen time

"The number of devices we have proliferate the overall time spent with screens," says Harvard researcher Dr. Steven Gortmaker.

To limit screen time, "Throw out those extra screens, and don't put one in your bedroom... Certainly, we need these devices, but try giving yourself a break."

A smart gift this holiday season: Less screen time and more face time with family and friends, a good book or a walk outside.

MORE

8 ways to reduce screen time
<https://tinyurl.com/5n7wha3r>

Deck the Halls with Avocados: A Gift for the Heart

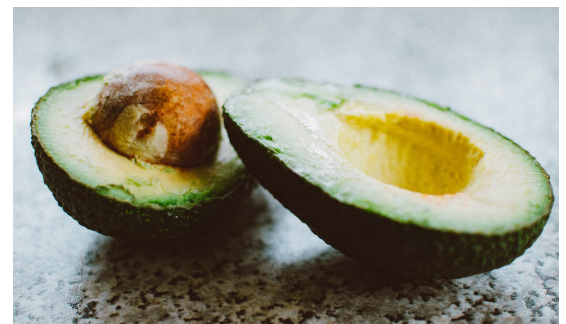
An avocado a day helps lower bad cholesterol levels

Setting out a Christmas Eve snack for Santa? It's no wonder the Jolly Old Elf is obese. There isn't enough holiday magic to turn a plate of cookies and a glass of whole milk into healthy foods.

In fact, dairy products, animal fats, and foods made with butter and cream are high in saturated fat. Too much raises LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. Over time, this can block blood vessels and limit blood flow to the heart and brain. Bad cholesterol raises the risk for a heart attack or stroke.

- **What's a heart healthy holiday snack?** It's good. It's green. And it contains healthy fats that help lower bad cholesterol.
- **The answer:** Deck the halls and your plate with avocados.

A recent study showed just how healthy avocados can be. Eating one a day for five weeks helped obese people lower bad cholesterol.²



Healthy fats and antioxidants in avocados can also help:

- Prevent plaque build-up on artery walls
- Reduce the risk for heart attack or stroke
- Lower the risk for certain types of cancer
- Improve blood pressure
- Lower triglycerides
- Support brain function
- Control hunger and aid in weight management



Potato Soup

Warm up a cold winter night with this easy-to-make soup. It's packed with healthy veggies with a creamy texture you'll love. Yum!⁵

Ingredients

- 1/2 C onion (chopped)
- 1/2 C celery (chopped)
- 6 Potatoes (diced)
- 2 T margarine
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 3 C water
- 2 T flour

Directions

1. Peel and chop the onion. Chop the celery. Peel the tomatoes, and cut into cubes.
2. Melt the margarine in a large saucepan on low heat.
3. Add the onion and celery. Cook for a few minutes.
4. Add the potatoes, salt, pepper, and 1 1/2 C water.
5. Cook for 15 minutes until the potatoes are tender.
6. In a small bowl, stir together the dry milk and flour.
7. Add 1-1/2 C water slowly, stirring as you add it.
8. Add the milk mix to the potatoes.
9. Cook until the soup is heated and slightly thickened.
10. Season as needed.

Makes 6 servings.
255 calories.

Hustle & Bustle: 4 Ways to Stay Active During the Holidays

Holiday schedule packed? You can still be active. Here's how...

If you're caught in a time-crunch to fit everything in during the holidays, you're not alone. Too often, exercise gets left behind to make room for other activities.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Here are four ways to stay active during the holidays:

1. Try 10-minute workouts

New research shows that short bursts of exercise can be just as good for your health and your heart as one 30-minute workout.³ Break it up into smaller doses. Take a walk. Use the stairs. Put that treadmill being used as a clothes hanger to better use. Or just clean the house in record time.

2. Burn calories with bodyweight exercises

You're stuck in a hotel room, in the guest room at a relative's house, or the weather is bad. Now what? Try bodyweight exercises like push-ups, curl-ups, jumping jacks, and wall squats. You'll rev up your heart rate and burn a ton of calories.

3. Walk it off

When you're on the go during the holidays, look for opportunities to walk.

MORE

Try this bodyweight workout
<https://tinyurl.com/yvzy5x5d>



Park far away at the store. Speed walk through the mall or airport. Move more. Sit less.

4. Set a goal

If you don't want to let exercise slide, set a goal. Sign up for a race. Aim to run or walk at least a mile a day. Get your family involved, too. Make an effort to be active every day during the holidays.

Start now, and these habits will help you kick off the New Year right!

Deck the Halls with Avocados: A Gift for the Heart (continued from page 1)

Hungry for better health this holiday season?

Spread avocado on whole-grain toast. Try veggie dip made with avocado. Add avocado to a salad or sandwich.

And leave a healthy snack for Santa: carrot sticks and guacamole. His reindeer will thank you.

MORE

Try these avocado recipes
<http://tinyurl.com/ajh3yav>

References

1. Keadle, S., et al. (2015). Causes of death associated with prolonged TV viewing. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 49(6): 811-821. From: [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(15\)00265-2/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(15)00265-2/fulltext)
2. Wang, L. et al. (2020). A moderate-fat diet with one avocado per day increases plasma antioxidants and decreases the oxidation of small, dense LDL in adults with overweight and obesity: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Nutrition*, 150(2): 276-284. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3u6nhw3n>
3. Stamatakis, E., et al. (2022). Association of wearable device-measured vigorous intermittent lifestyle physical activity with mortality. *Nature Medicine*, 28: 2521-2529. From: <https://tinyurl.com/bdecp862>
4. Khatib, H.K.A., et al. (2017). The effects of partial sleep deprivation on energy balance: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 71(5): 614-624. From: <https://tinyurl.com/bdcszcz2>
5. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2023). Potato soup. From: <https://tinyurl.com/2a6xjuud>



Take the December Health Challenge!

Connect with Others: Make time to build social bonds

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:

How can I prevent weight gain during the holidays?



WELLNESS CHALLENGE

Powered by:





Connect With Others

CHALLENGE

Make time to build social bonds

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Connect With Others.”
2. Make time to build social bonds and connect with others
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



In the middle of a holiday party with family, Chuck Noland leaves in a hurry to deal with a problem at work in the movie *Cast Away*. It could have waited.

But Noland (played by Tom Hanks) is obsessed with his job. His family and friends don't seem to matter

as much to him. So while everyone else is celebrating, he boards a plane that flies into a terrible storm.

The plane crashes in the middle of the ocean. Noland is the only survivor. Only then does he begin to realize the value of relationships. He even names a volleyball “Wilson.” Then he talks to it like a person about his daily life, ideas, thoughts, and concerns.

Four years later, Nolan finally builds a raft with a sail to try and get off the island. But during his attempt, “Wilson” falls from the raft and drifts away. Losing that only source of companionship hits Nolan hard. And it's another reminder to him that the people in his life are important.

How would you rate your relationships with others at home or at work? Excellent, fair, could be better? If you want to live a healthy life, it's no secret that you should eat a balanced diet and get regular exercise. But healthy living doesn't stop there.

Healthy and positive relationships can have a powerful impact on your happiness, health, and longevity. Take the month-long Health Challenge to Connect With Others.

The Connection Quiz

How much do you know about the benefits of healthy relationships and connecting with others? Take the quiz to find out.



T F

1. People with strong social bonds recover faster from illness or injury.
2. Chronic loneliness has no impact on how long you will live.
3. Half of all adults feel alone, isolated, or left out, at times.
4. Long-term loneliness may be just as harmful as smoking cigarettes.
5. People with a supportive group of friends eat healthier and get more exercise.

How did you do? Research shows your social network can impact your health in positive ways.¹ People with strong social bonds tend to be healthier, live longer, and feel happier than lonely people. Don't have strong social bonds? Now is always the best time to start making friends and nurturing relationships.

Answers: 1.True, 2.True, 3.False, 4.True, 5.True.

How to Live a Long & Healthy Life with the Ones You Love

Want to live longer? It's a topic Harvard researcher Dr. Robert Waldinger has been studying for decades.²

He and other health researchers have spent hours looking for the secrets to health and long life. It turns out genetics, health habits, and living conditions aren't the only factors.

“The surprising finding is that our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health,” says Waldinger.

Good connections improve health
<https://tinyurl.com/okgiwzg>



7 Easy Ways to Connect with Others

If you want to build healthier relationships, you have to be willing to do your part. And it's really not that hard. Here are seven ways you can connect with others.

1. Keep promises

If you say you're going to get a project done on deadline, or plan to meet a friend for coffee, clear your schedule to make it happen. If you don't think you can do it, don't make a promise and then back out. If you need more time, come up short, or can't keep your promise, let others know as soon as possible.

2. Be dependable

When people know they can count on you to get stuff done, follow through, and take action, you'll build a stronger bond.

Fun fact: When two kids thousands of miles apart in different countries began writing to each other as penpals 20-plus years ago, they built a bond. After decades of staying in touch, Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda even wrote the book: *I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives*.

3. Be honest

Long before Abraham Lincoln was president, he worked in a small store. When he realized he short-changed a shopper a few cents, he closed the store and walked miles to deliver the correct change. It's one of many acts of honesty that earned him the nickname, "Honest Abe." At home and at work, be honest. It really is the best policy.

4. Apologize

Stuff happens. People make mistakes. You miss a meeting. You can't make it to your kid's soccer game. The company email you wrote has typos. If you really want to build stronger bonds with others, let people know you're sorry when you've done something wrong or made a mistake.

5. Listen

There's at least one reason Ernest Hemingway was such a great writer with a literary gift. He was a good listener. "When people talk, listen completely," said Hemingway. "Most people never listen." The next time someone is talking to you, listen. Focus on what they're saying. And the next time you have something to say, they'll be more likely to listen, too.

6. Be supportive

Let's face it. Work life and family life don't always jive. And stuff happens, like a death

Be social to live longer
<https://tinyurl.com/vcy78z8n>

So what's the secret to a long and healthy life?

Research shows these nine things make a difference:



1. Keep on learning.
2. Don't smoke—quit if you do.
3. Avoid or limit alcohol.
4. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
5. Be physically active.
6. Maintain a healthy weight, or lose weight if you need to.
7. Sleep 7 to 8 hours a night.
8. Learn to adapt to events and situations.
9. **And last but not least:** Build strong bonds with others.

Research shows that strong bonds with others are good for your heart and your health.³ They help reduce stress, lower the risk for heart disease, ward off depression and loneliness, and may even slow age-related memory loss.

in the family, car accident, career changes, family matters, or financial woes.

Take care of your family. Or when a friend or co-worker is facing a challenge, be supportive, and step in to help out when you can. Send a letter, text message, or email. Call or stop by, just to let them know you care.

7. Share a laugh

Sharing a laugh with family and friends helps build stronger bonds.⁴ Share a funny joke, meme, story, video or social media post. Or watch a funny movie together.

Life isn't always easy, but a little laughter can help you and the people you care about.

"Laughter causes the release of endorphins," says Loma Linda University researcher Dr. Lee S. Berk. "...It also decreases cortisol, which then reduces stress."

Make connections to live long and prosper

When you make the effort to connect with others, you'll feel happier, be healthier, and live longer. You can even call or text someone you care about right now.

Why connection & kindness matter
<https://tinyurl.com/9zpd37rz>

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). How does social connectedness affect health? From: <https://tinyurl.com/sjbppp2j>
2. Mineo, L. (2017). Good genes are nice, but joy is better. Harvard University. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y9o0ynak>
3. Freebourn, N., et al. (2019). Perceived social support and the risk of cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality in the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study. *Menopause*, 26(7): 698-707. From: <https://tinyurl.com/mrxdtfpm>
4. Manninen, S., et al. (2017). Social laughter triggers endogenous opioid release in humans. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 37(25): 6125-6131. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y37u3nvw>



Connect With Others

CHALLENGE

Make time to build social bonds

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Make time to build social bonds and connect with others.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to connect with others.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		

_____ Number of days this month I connected with others

_____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____



WORKPLACE WELLNESS
MEMBERSHIP

ASK THE DOCTOR

Powered by:



Q. How can I prevent weight gain during the holidays?

A. If you want to avoid packing on a few extra pounds during the holidays, you need a plan.

Why? The average adult gains a pound or more during the month of December. According to recent study that tracked the weight of 3,000 people during the holidays, that's what researchers found.¹

That might not sound like a lot. But if you keep adding a pound or so every holiday season, it starts to add up. It's one reason about 74 percent of adults are overweight or obese.²

But it doesn't have to be that way. Make these healthy habits part of your holiday traditions, and you'll avoid holiday weight gain. Here's how:

1. Move more, sit less

When faced with a time crunch during the holidays, many people skip exercise to fit other things into their day. But to avoid gaining weight, it's even more important to stay active during this time.

Take a walk to see Christmas lights. Walk more at the mall or store. Stick to your regular exercise schedule as much as possible.

2. Drink more water

It's zero calories. The other drinks at the holiday party typically aren't.



For example:

- A single glass of eggnog is 300 to 500 calories.
- Fruit punch and soft drinks have 150 to 250 calories.
- A classic alcoholic drink has 150 to 225 calories.

Your body needs water to stay hydrated and support digestion, brain function, movement, and more.

3. Focus on fruits and vegetables

You're at the holiday buffet or party table...what should you do? Fill your plate with fruits and vegetables first. They're nutrient dense and lower in calories than desserts and dishes made with sugar, cream, or sauces.

And if you start here, you can still enjoy dessert without overeating.

4. Cook healthy holiday food at home

You could go out to eat with family and friends to celebrate. But you're more likely to overeat.

A survey of 364 different restaurant meals found that the average dining-out meal contains 1,500 calories.³

Add drinks, appetizers, and desserts, and one meal contains more calories than most adults need in a day.

ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

Instead, cook healthy food and meals at home more often during the holidays.

5. Maintain, don't gain

Set a goal to just maintain your weight during the holidays. Here's an easy way to help prevent weight gain: Step on the scale

Pick a frequency that works for you. Daily or just once a week. A recent study found that regular weigh-ins can help you maintain your weight or even lose a few pounds by reminding you to make healthy choices.⁴

When you approach the holidays this way, you can still enjoy treats, desserts, and good food without gaining weight. And these healthy habits will help you all year long.

References

1. Helander, E.E., et al. (2016). Weight gain over the holidays in three countries. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 375(12): 1200- 1202. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y2fopuvm>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Obesity and overweight. From: <https://tinyurl.com/mvfze5yk>
3. Urban, L., et al. (2016). Energy contents of frequently ordered restaurant meals and comparison with human energy requirements and USDA database information: A multisite randomized study. *Journal of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 116(4):590-598. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y2lg4kmx>
4. Kaviani, S., et al. (2019). Daily self-weighing to prevent holiday-associated weight gain in adults. *Obesity*, 27(6):908-916. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y2a7y5p3>



Head Office: 502 Old Wonderland Rd. London, ON N6K 1L6
info@ewsnetwork.com | www.ewsnetwork.com