December, 2012

Greetings, SEMPAC Partners.

Welcome to the December edition of the SEMPAC Newsletter. In this issue, we share tips for making the holidays healthy, and we extend our wishes to you for a happy holiday and a wonderful new year.

As always, if you have something you’d like to share with SEMPAC partners, or if there is something you’re interested in learning more about, please let us know!

Thank you for your work to reduce cancer health disparities among older African Americans in Detroit. We, like you, are committed to making a difference.

Teri
Terrance L. Albrecht, PhD
Population Studies and Disparities Research
Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute

Bob
Robert A. Chapman, MD
Josephine Ford Cancer Center
Henry Ford Health System

Make Health A Holiday Tradition

Holidays are a time for celebration, for making memories and for honoring old ones! They can often be busy and stressful and the perfect time to cut corners and take a break from healthy habits. But don’t fret; there are some easy ways you can make health part of your holiday tradition.

Healthy Holiday Party Eating

- **Take small portions.** Your holiday plate does not need to be piled high. Take small portions, use a smaller plate, eat slowly and wait a little while before you go back for seconds.

- **Add a few vegetables and/or fruit.** There are often lots of things offered at a holiday party. Start with vegetables and fruit. Skip the dip for both items to avoid calories and fat. This is a good way to get started and make sure that you eat a balanced meal.

- **Bring a dish.** Offer to bring a low-calorie dish to holiday parties. Your host might appreciate it, and you’ll know that at least one healthy item will be on hand.

- **Trim the dessert.** You can scrape lots of calories off treats and still enjoy the experience. Scrape off the icing off a piece of carrot cake and save 245 calories. Eat pie without the crust and save
• **Watch the liquid calories.** Holiday celebrations can translate into lots of extra calories from drinks you don't normally consume. For example, 1 cup of eggnog has 340 calories. It is OK to enjoy these drinks every once in a while, but don't make it an everyday holiday occurrence. Have a glass of water, apple cider or cranberry juice and club soda.

• **Eat before you party.** To prevent you from eating everything at your holiday social functions, eat small light meals throughout the day. That way when you arrive at the party you won’t want to eat everything in sight.

• **Mingle!** Don't park yourself in front of the buffet at a party. If you stand by the buffet, you'll eat more than you would if it was across the room. Instead work hard to meet new people, talk to those you have never talked to, and catch up with those people you haven't seen in a while.

**Simple Ways to Stop Seasonal Stress**

• **Be realistic.** Traditions and rituals often change as families change and grow. Hold on to those traditions that you can, but realize that you may have to let go of others.

• **Stick to a budget.** Remember that the holidays are not about who got the biggest gift. Set a reasonable budget and stick to it! If you don’t you could feel anxious and tense for months as you try to pay the bills. Give homemade gifts or start a family gift exchange.

• **Set priorities.** Learn to say no to social engagements that you just don’t have time for. Believe it or not, people will understand if you can’t make it. If you say yes, only to what you want to do, you will feel less overwhelmed and bitter.

• **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting neighbors and friends, etc. Plan your menus and make what you can ahead of time. This will help prevent the last minute scramble to pick up items you may have forgotten.

• **Forget about perfection.** Holiday TV specials are often full of happy families with no problems, and if they do have problems they are resolved within 1-2 hours. In real life, it does not usually work out that way. Your husband will burn the cookies, your mother-in-law will criticize something, and your brother will start up an old argument, all in the matter of an hour. Accept imperfections in yourself and others, and don’t sweat the small stuff.

• **Seek professional help if you need it.** The holidays are often a hard time for many people. Despite your best efforts, if you still find yourself feeling persistently anxious, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless and unable to face routine chores for several weeks, seek professional help. Speak with your doctor or a mental health professional.

**Let the holiday spirit move you!**

• **Stick to it!** Stick to your regular exercise routine as much as possible. Especially during the holidays, plan your physical activity routine in advance (don’t leave it up to chance). Mark it on the calendar and consider it as important as any other appointment. Get at least 30 minutes of
moderate intensity physical activity daily, and more if possible.

- **Limit screen time.** Cut back on your family’s television viewing time and limit the number of hours your children spend playing video games. Instead make a new holiday tradition. Take a brisk walk around the neighborhood to see the holiday decorations or grab your bike or walking shoes and head out to the nearest trails or national park.

- **Take advantage of layovers.** Flying? Don’t sit around waiting to board your flight, walk around the airport; browse the gift shops. No reason to spend your waiting time sitting, there will be plenty of that on the plane.

- **Game day.** Play some backyard football or Frisbee with children and adults before the big holiday dinner or during football half-time.

- **Let the music move you.** Dance or exercise to your favorite holiday music.

- **Shop 'till you drop!** If you shop at the mall, park further away from the entrance and walk. When at the mall shopping, use the stairs instead of the escalator.

- **Carry it over.** Make a New Year's resolution with friends to start a daily walking group.

Information for this article was abstracted from [http://www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/spotlights/healthy-holiday-traditions.php](http://www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/spotlights/healthy-holiday-traditions.php) and modified for use in the SEMPAC Newsletter. This newsletter is intended expressly for informational purposes. The views represented in this article are not necessarily reflective of the views of the SEMPAC Center.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**