

December

W P A S B T C V L Y Y Z W Q G A C  
Y O Y N N A U L D L A N G S Y N E  
X G N E D O I K C B H C E Y N R L  
C C V S O H I H W A Q O D I E A E  
G D V C C Q R T K A F P Z Q W E B  
A T W D N I K K A O N C R I Y Y R  
G D N Z S Z U U K R P Z Y C E E A  
B I V T Z N H Y A D O O A U A H T  
W O M B A U X Z J B J C D A R T I  
C A X H A Z D L O C Z F E Q S F O  
S T N I C H O L A S D A Y D E O N  
V L C Z N X A H Q Q A F A E V D C  
M Q M E O G K K N O X G T O E N X  
A G H O L I D A Y S Y C K Z M E W  
Y A D R O B R A H L R A E P M G N  
B S A M X F O S Y A D E V L E W T  
A E V W I N T E R S O L S T I C E

Advent	Christmas	Holidays	St Nicholas Day
Auld Lang	Cold	Kwanzaa	Twelve Days of Xmas
Syne	Decorations	New Years Eve	Wind Chill
Boxing Day	End of the Year	Pearl Harbor Day	Winter Solstice
Celebration	Hanukkah	Snow	



Kylee Leo, Missy Hill (Krystal’s Mom!), and Krystal Simonson staff the kitchen at the Polk County Norwoodville Chili Fundraiser

Did you know?

Aging Resources provides free nutrition counseling with a registered dietitian. To learn more, call: Carol Schmidt, Nutrition Services Director, at (515) 633-9518.



HOLIDAY HUMOR

What does Santa do when the reindeer fly too fast?  
He holds on for deer life.

What do you call a greedy elf? Elfish.

Why did the Gingerbread Man go to the doctor?  
He was feeling crumby.

What’s every parent’s favorite Christmas Carol?  
Silent Night.

What’s worse than a reindeer with a runny nose?  
A snowman with a fever!

What happens to Christmas trees on Valentine’s Day?  
They get all sappy.

How did Scrooge win the football game?  
The ghost of Christmas passed.

If there were 11 elves and another joined them, what would he be?  
The twelf.

What did Santa give his reindeer with a stomach bug?  
Elk-a-seltzer.

What’s the best thing to put into a Christmas cookie?  
Your teeth.

What is Mistletoe’s favorite rock band?  
Kiss.

Why is it so hard to resist drinking eggnog around the holidays?  
It’s sold everywhere, you just can’t egg-nore it.



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NUTRITION NEWS  
December 2023

Merry Christmas!

Eat Smart and Stay Healthy During the Holidays

It’s no secret that holiday living doesn’t always go hand-in-hand with healthy living. The indulgent, decadent recipes that adorn Hanukkah and Christmas tables may not follow the diets we stick to the rest of the year. Temptations are everywhere, and parties and travel disrupt daily routines. But with some tips, you’ll be able to stay mentally and physically healthy throughout the holiday season.

Opt for homemade instead of processed foods.

Homemade everything can be difficult when you have a lot going on, but it can also ensure that you’re eating much healthier. Canned, processed, and premade foods are full of excess salt and sugar that you can avoid by making the dishes yourself. Making the food from scratch will also make you much more aware of what you’re eating and when, giving you more control and awareness in the long run.

Add more vegetables.

It’s easy to go all-out with our favorite recipes, but sometimes eating better is as simple as keeping more healthy choices on hand. Increase the number of vegetable dishes on the dinner table, finding small twists to dress them up without making them unhealthy. Roasted asparagus can be beautiful on its own, and roasted carrots or sweet potatoes are rich in taste and a bright pop of color.

Slow down during meals.

While decadent food might make us eager to eat, a key tip to staying healthy over the holidays is to slow down

during mealtime. Multiple studies have shown that eating slowly can give our stomachs enough time to send the hormonal signal to our brain telling us that we’re full, which will stop us from accidentally overeating. This can help us maintain better portion control as a result. Listen to your body. Sometimes we eat when we’re bored or stressed or until we’re uncomfortably stuffed. Pay attention to the signals your body is giving you, and it will tell you what you need and when is too much. Try intuitive eating, which

allows for treats but asks you to trust your body to tell you when to say no. Take your time and aim for a balance of healthy foods throughout the day. Eat until you are satisfied, not stuffed. No one likes that icky, stuffed feeling after a meal. Eat slowly and check your fullness levels while you’re eating.

Don’t skip meals.

Skipping a meal with the goal of saving calories prior to a holiday event can often backfire and lead to overeating due to ravenous feelings of hunger. Having a filling snack, such as fruit, string cheese, yogurt or a small handful of nuts, can help to curb your appetite and prevent overeating.

Choose drinks wisely and drink more water.

Stick to calorie-free drinks, such as water, tea or seltzer, instead of high-calorie festive drinks. Alcoholic beverages contribute empty calories. If you do choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation, and alternate each alcoholic drink with a glass of water. Staying hydrated can boost your energy level. Drinking water before, during and after meals can also keep you from overeating.



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Eat Smart and Stay Healthy During the Holidays

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Fit in Favorites

No food is on the naughty list. Choose the dishes you really love and can't get any other time of year, like Aunt Edna's pumpkin pie. Savor a small serving and make sure you take time to really taste and enjoy that special treat when you have it. It's all about moderation. Moderation will be your saving grace during the holiday season. There's nothing wrong with enjoying an indulgent, festive dinner — but you'll want to make sure that your meals surrounding it are healthy and nutrient dense. Have a light lunch like salad with olive oil dressing, and opt for a healthy breakfast the next morning like avocado on whole wheat toast. By eating healthy during the holiday season, you can afford to have a few favorites at big events. And remember portion control.

Keep Moving

Don't forgo exercise. It's important to maintain regular exercise for both your mental and physical health. Exercise is good for your body and it can help make up for eating more than usual and reduce stress during this most stressful time of year. Get moving with friends and family, such as taking a walk after a holiday meal.

Walking after a meal can give you several distinct benefits. First, you can get exercise at a time when you might not otherwise be exercising as frequently. It can also provide some time to de-stress and aid your digestion all at once. All of these factors combined are good for your physical and mental health.

Get Your ZZZ's

This can be particularly challenging with the increase in activities and family in town. But sticking to your sleep schedule will improve your quality of sleep both now and after the holidays. Studies have shown that, unsurprisingly, irregular sleep schedules can lead to poor sleep quality, fatigue, poor eating habits, and daytime sleepiness that can take time to reverse. Avoid this by sticking to your typical sleep schedule, going to bed and waking up as close to the same time as you usually do.

Maintain your physical and mental health to start the new year off strong!  
**Happy New Year!**



SOURCE: HEALTHLINE.COM, CDC.GOV

Cranberries  
Fruit of the Month



*You may only think of eating cranberries around Thanksgiving, but this fruit can add some zing (and plenty of health benefits) year-round. Cranberries, which are mostly carbohydrates and fiber, contain about 90% water. They also contain vitamins and minerals like vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin K and manganese and they are a powerhouse of antioxidants.*

Health benefits of cranberries

**Prevent urinary tract infections.** Probably the most known benefit of cranberry juice is that it can prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs). Cranberries don't treat the infection once you have it but they can be beneficial and could prove to be a proactive approach. Cranberries contain compounds called a-type proanthocyanidins, which prevent E. coli bacteria from attaching to the lining of your urethra and bladder.

**Prevent cavities.** You may not immediately think of cranberries as a way to prevent cavities, but research shows that the a-type proanthocyanidins that help prevent UTIs can help control harmful acids and bacteria formation in your mouth. Cranberries could help prevent not only cavities, but also gum disease, tooth decay and oral cancer.

**Reduce inflammation.** Cranberries have anti-inflammatory effects, thanks to their high amounts of antioxidants, especially anthocyanins and flavanols, which give cranberries their dark hue and they can help lower inflammation in our bodies.

**Maintain digestive health.** If you eat an animal-based diet, cranberries can help put good bacteria into your digestive system. A-type proanthocyanidins, which are only found in cranberries, can help with reducing the bad microbes that live in your colon.

**Improve heart health.** From lowering blood pressure to improving cholesterol levels, cranberries can help improve your overall heart health.

Cranberries can potentially help improve your lipid profile by raising HDL (good) cholesterol and helping lower LDL (bad).

**Prevent cancer.** Researchers are starting to study if the a-type proanthocyanidins in cranberries may have anti-cancer properties.

Try adding cranberries to your diet! You can find them dried, fresh or frozen. Keep them on hand for a variety of recipes like smoothies, sauce or salad dressing or add them to yogurt or oatmeal. But be mindful of added sugar and check the label. Cranberries are an easy way to add in those antioxidants and help improve your health all year long.

SOURCE: HEALTH.CLEVELANDCLINIC.ORG



Gift Card Scam

Gift cards can be a great, convenient way to give someone a gift this holiday season. Unfortunately, they are also a convenient way for scammers to steal money from you! Scammers like to use gift cards as they are not only an easy way for their victims to send money but are hard to trace after they are purchased. When purchasing a gift card, it is always best to purchase them directly from the retailer. When choosing a gift card to purchase, it is safest to purchase those that are located behind the counter or are in well-sealed packaging. If you believe a gift card you have purchased has been tampered with by a scammer, be sure to notify the retail store it was purchased from, the police, and the Federal Trade Commission at [reportfraud.ftc.gov](https://reportfraud.ftc.gov). Always remember, gift cards are for gifts, NOT payments! If a caller demands payment by gift card, they will always be a scammer. If you do receive a phone call, be wary of these 5 signs that indicate you may be being targeted by a scammer:

- 1. Scammers make an unusual payment request (i.e., wire transfer, gift card, cryptocurrency).
- 2. Scammers pretend to be a person of authority, like a police officer or government official.
- 3. Scammers will pressure you into acting fast, which leaves less time for you to realize it is a scam.
- 4. Scammers will tell you to not tell anyone.
- 5. Scammers will play on your emotions, especially those of panic and fear.

If you do find yourself the victim of a scam, don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help. Call Aging Resources at (515) 255-1310 and ask to speak to an Elder Rights Specialist.

A FLU VACCINE CAN TAKE FLU FROM

WILD TO mild

A lion standing in a savanna landscape, with a small kitten sitting in the foreground.

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines add another LAYER OF PROTECTION

A graphic showing a blue bandage and a green checkmark, symbolizing protection and health.